



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



TOL-
STOY

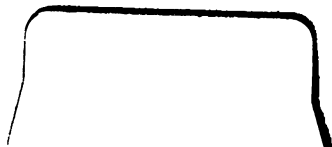


What
I
Be-
lie-
ve

F05004

OK.

May 1912.



WHAT I BELIEVE

F0500

OK

May 1912



The Free Age Press
"Later Works"

WHAT I BELIEVE

The Free Age Press stands for an attempt to assist in spreading the deepest convictions of the noblest spirits of every age and race : that life has an essentially religious meaning, and that man's true aim and happiness consists in unity in reason and love in place of the present insane and unhappy struggle which is bringing and can bring real good to no one ; and that to attain this end the old way is still the best ;—we must each strive to eliminate *from ourselves* those false conceptions and false desires—religious, social, economic,—which now alienate us one from the other, and endeavour to return to a simpler way of existence in accordance with reason, justice, and love.

The writings of Leo Tolstoy being to-day perhaps the most definite expression of these truly Christian and universally religious aspirations, and, moreover, being specially accessible to us through a close personal connection, *The Free Age Press* is for the present associating itself entirely with cheap editions of his extant religious, social, and ethical works, and his unpublished and new writings.

We earnestly trust that all who sympathise will continue to assist us in circulating these books. No private person has benefited or will benefit financially by the existence of *The Free Age Press* ; the books are issued free of copyright, so that any one may reprint them who wishes ; and any profits made (necessarily small) will go to assist the same work in the Russian language. For the hundreds of kindly letters received from all parts of the world, and the practical help in publicity which has enabled us to circulate upwards of 200,000 booklets and 250,000 leaflets since July 1900, we are very grateful, and tender our hearty thanks.

All letters, orders, etc., should be addressed to THE FREE AGE PRESS (English Branch), Christchurch, Hants. We should be glad to extend our list of friends to whom new books are sent as issued, payment being made on receipt of books.

The present new uniform series can be obtained through the same trade channels as before, particulars of which are given elsewhere, but direct orders through the post are very welcome.

April 1902.

The Free Age Press
"Later Works of
Tolstoy (1878 —)"
Edited by V. Tchert-
koff & A. C. Fifield

WHAT I BELIEVE

("MY RELIGION") . . .

BY LEO TOLSTOY . . .

NO RIGHTS RESERVED

THE FREE AGE PRESS
CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS 1902

TK

BR125

T613

1902

Uniform with this Book—

"On Life." By LEO TOLSTOY. A new Translation of this little-known book—"a book which is of especial value as a key to Tolstoy's method and belief" (Mr. H. W. Massingham). Paper covers, 6d. nett; post free, 7½d. Flexible cloth, gilt, gilt top, 1s. nett; post free, 1s. 2d. Leather, gilt, gilt top, 2s. nett; post free, 2s. 2d.

"What is Religion?" An entirely new work which Tolstoy has just completed, together with several other new and recent articles and letters. Prices as "On Life."

We hope eventually to issue the whole of Tolstoy's writings since 1878, in volumes uniform with this book.

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	7
I. THE KEY TO THE GOSPEL TEACHING	9
II. THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE	19
III. JESUS AND THE STATE	26
IV. THE FIRST STEP	41
V. JESUS AND THE MOSAIC LAW	50
VI. THE NEW COMMANDMENTS	66
VII. THE VEIL OF FALSE DOCTRINE	100
VIII. THE PATH OF LIFE	118
IX. FAITH AND WORKS	141
X. "MY YOKE IS EASY"	152
XI. THE DEAD CHURCH	180
XII. THE LIVING CHURCH	207

EDITORIAL NOTE

THIS book, though written nearly twenty years ago, remains still perhaps the best introduction to the study of Tolstoy's writings as showing the way along which he has come, and his most uncompromising view of practical Christianity. Its story is very largely of "breaking bands asunder," but though Tolstoy's conception of life and of the essential meaning of Christ's message has since travelled far beyond the somewhat limited view here given, its practical conclusions, the five commandments, lie at the foundation of all his subsequent life and work. "Do not be angry nor superior. Commit no fornication. Do not take oaths nor judge. Do not defend yourself by violence. Do not make war," Tolstoy here finds are the principal obligations of the Christian religion, and these obligations reappear in substance and expression in his *Popular Stories and Legends*, his novel *Resurrection*, his restatement of the Christian conception, *The Kingdom of God is Within You*, his examinations of the causes of physical poverty and distress *What Shall We do Then?* and *The Slavery of Our Times*, and in his numerous letters and essays.

A study of *How I Came to Believe*, the earlier portion of this book ("Free Age Press," 3d), should precede the examination of this work, if one might venture to make the suggestion, and readers who wish to know the view of life to which Tolstoy has since arrived should pass on to his work *On Life* (a new translation of which is published uniform with this volume), a work unfortunately too little known in England, thence to his new book, *What is Religion?* and thence to *The Christian Teaching*; while those desirous of testing further his reading of Christ's words should obtain *A Short Exposition of the Gospel Narrative (The Gospel in Brief)*, at present published at 2s. 6d., but shortly to be included in this series.

We have to thank our friend Mrs. Fyvie Mayo for much assistance in revising the English of this originally very rugged translation, a reprint, with numerous and lengthy omissions replaced, and so altered as to be almost a new rendering, of the version published in 1885 by Messrs. Kegan Paul & Co.

A. C. F.

WHAT I BELIEVE

INTRODUCTION

WHEN I reached the age of fifty, five years ago, with the exception of the fourteen or fifteen years of childhood I had been for thirty-five years a Nihilist, in the true sense of that word, that is to say, not a socialist or a revolutionist, as the word is generally understood, but a Nihilist in the sense that I had no religious belief.

Five years ago I began to believe in the teaching of Jesus Christ, and my life was suddenly changed. I ceased to care for all that I had formerly desired, and began to long for what I had once cared nothing for. What had before seemed good, seemed bad, and what had seemed bad, now seemed good. That happened to me which might happen to a man, who, having left his home on business, should suddenly realize that the business was unnecessary and should go home again. All that was on his right hand now stands to his left; all that was to the left is now to the right. His former wish to be as far from home as possible, has changed into the desire to be near it.

The tendency of my life, and all my desires, became different: good and evil changed places. And all this came from understanding the teaching of Jesus otherwise than as I had formerly understood it.

I do not wish to be taken as an interpreter of Christ's teaching; I only wish to relate how I have come to understand what is simplest in that teaching, what is clearest, most comprehensible, surest, and of most universal application, and how this understanding has affected the foundations of my mind, and given me quiet and happiness.

I do not wish to "explain" the teaching of Jesus; I desire only one thing: to deprecate special "explanations" of any kind.

Christian Churches have always agreed that all men, however unequal in learning and intellect, the wise and the foolish, are equal before God; that God's truth is attainable by one and all. Christ has even said, that it is God's will to make clear to the foolish what is hidden from the wise.

Into the mysteries of dogmatic, patristic, liturgic, apologetic, and similar writings few can be initiated; but all can and ought to understand what Jesus has said to all the millions of the simple and the unwise who have lived and are living on the earth. Just this, which Jesus spoke to all the simple folk who never had an opportunity of asking for an explanation from a Paul, a Clement, or a Chrysostom — just this I once did not understand, and now, having understood, just this I wish to tell to all.

The thief on the cross believed and was saved. Would it, indeed, have been a bad thing, a thing hurtful to any one, had the thief not died on the cross, but descended from it and related his belief in Jesus?

I too, like the thief on the cross, believed the teaching of Jesus and was saved. And this is no far-fetched comparison, but the most exact representation of that mental state of despair and horror at the problem of life and death in which I once found myself, and of that condition of peace and happiness in which I now live.

I, like the thief, knew that the life I had lived and was living was bad, that the majority of men around me led the same life. I also, like the thief, knew that I was unhappy and suffering, and that around me others were also unhappy and suffering; and I saw no issue but death alone. I, like the thief, was nailed by some force to a cross—to an evil and suffering life. And, as the terrible darkness of death after the countless agonies and ills of life awaited the thief, so they awaited me.

In all this I was like the thief: the difference between myself and him was this, that he was dying and I was still alive. The thief could believe that his salvation was there, beyond the grave; but I could not be satisfied with that, because, besides the life beyond the grave, there was yet before me a life here. I did not understand that life; it seemed to me terrible;—then suddenly I heard the words of Jesus; I understood them; and life and death ceased to appear evil. Instead of despair I felt the joy and happiness of a life never to be destroyed by death.

Surely it can harm no one if I relate how this happened with me.

LEO TOLSTOY.

Moscow, *January 22, 1884.*

CHAPTER I

THE KEY TO THE GOSPEL TEACHING

I HAVE explained in two long works—"A Criticism of Dogmatic Theology," and "A New Translation and Harmony of the Four Gospels," my former misapprehension of the teaching of Jesus, and how and whence

knowledge came to me. In these two works I have endeavoured systematically and step by step to examine everything that may hide the truth from men, and verse by verse to translate, compare, and incorporate the Four Narratives.

For six years this has been my work. Every year, every month, I find more and again more doubts made clear, and fresh confirmations of the fundamental idea. I correct the faults which have arisen from haste or over-eagerness, and revise what has been done already. My life, of which there cannot be much left, will probably be ended before my work; but that work I am convinced is wanted, and while life remains I shall do what I can.

So much for my material labour on the theology of the Gospels. But my internal, spiritual labour, of which I wish to speak here, has been different. It has been no systematic investigation of the theology and the text of the Gospels.

It has been the instantaneous removal of all misconception and obstruction, the instantaneous lustre of the divine light of truth. I was as a man who, from an incorrect drawing, strives to puzzle out the meaning of a confused heap of marble fragments, when suddenly some larger piece reveals the fact that the statue differs totally from his anticipation, and then, reuniting the fragments, he sees, as piece by piece the parts grow to a whole, the gradual confirmation of his new idea. This is what happened to me: this is what I wish to relate.

I wish to relate how I found that key to the understanding of the teaching of Jesus, which revealed the truth to me with a clearness and persuasiveness excluding all possibility of doubt.

The discovery came about in this way. From the time when I began to read the Gospel for myself, almost from childhood, what touched and

affected me most, were those passages in which Jesus spoke of love, humility, self-abasement, self-sacrifice, and the repayment of evil by good. This has always been for me the substance of Christianity; that in it which my heart loved; because of which I, after despair and unbelief, accepted the idea of life adopted by a Christian and laborious people; because of which I submitted myself to the faith professed by that people, the faith of the Orthodox Church. But, after submitting to the Church, I soon perceived that I could not find in her teaching a confirmation of those principles of Christianity which I believe to be the most important; I perceived that what to me was the very substance of Christianity did not in fact form the basis of the Church's teaching. I saw that what seemed to me of most importance in the teaching of Jesus was not so recognized by the Church. She recognizes another principle as the all important. At first I was not inclined to regard this difference as of vital significance. "What does it matter?" thought I. "The Church, besides the ideas of love, humility, and self-sacrifice, accepts a dogmatic and external meaning. This is foreign to me, it is even repellent, but there is no harm in it."

But the longer I lived in obedience to the teaching of the Church, the more clear it became that this discrepancy was not so unimportant as I had at first thought. The Church repelled me by the strangeness of her dogmas, by her acceptance and approval of persecutions, executions, and war; and by the disputes of conflicting creeds. But my belief was chiefly undermined by her indifference to what to me was the very substance of the teaching of Jesus; and, on the other hand, by her partiality for what I considered unimportant in it. I felt that something was wrong here, but what I could not tell. And this increased my difficulties:—that the

Church not only did not deny what seemed to me most important in the teaching of Jesus, but distinctly recognized it, yet in such a way that it no longer occupied the first place. I could not reproach the Church with denying what was essential, but she had so accepted it as to make it unsatisfying. She had not given me what I had expected from her.

I had passed from Nihilism to the Church only because I felt it impossible to live without faith, without the knowledge of good and evil apart from my own animal instincts. This knowledge I believed I could find in Christianity; but Christianity, as it then showed itself to me, was merely a certain "tendency" exceedingly vague, from which proceeded no clear and obligatory rules of conduct. For these rules I turned to the Church. But the Church gave me rules which brought me no nearer to the Christianity I desired; nay, rather tended to keep me from it. I could not, then, go with the Church. A life based upon Christian truths was to me both dear and needful; but the Church gave me rules of conduct quite unconnected with these truths. Her rules about faith in dogmas, the observance of the sacraments, fasts and prayers, I did not need; and of rules based on Christian truths there were none.

Nay, her rules even weakened, and sometimes quite destroyed, that Christian state of feeling which alone gave a meaning to life. And what disturbed me most was, that all the ills of humanity—the condemnation of individuals, of nations, and of other creeds; and the results of such condemnation: executions, wars, and so forth,—all these things were approved by the Church. The essence of the teaching of Jesus,—humility, forbearance, forgiveness of injuries, self-sacrifice, love,—all these were exalted by the Church in words, yet, at the

same time, all that was incompatible with them was approved in practice.

Was, then, the teaching of Jesus of such a nature that these contradictions were bound to exist? I could not believe it. Moreover, it had always struck me as an astonishing fact that, so far as I was acquainted with the Gospel, the passages on which definite dogmatic theories were founded were those which were most obscure, while those which defined the practical application of the doctrine of Jesus, were most clear and most categorical. Yet the dogmas, and a Christian's obligation to them, were defined by the Church in the clearest and most precise manner, while her practical application of the teaching of Jesus was allegorical, vague, and indeterminate. Was this the way Jesus wished his teaching to be interpreted?

The answer to my doubts was to be found only in the Gospels. I read and re-read them. Of the whole Gospel scheme one thing had always stood out for me in stronger relief than any other: the Sermon on the Mount. And this it was that I read oftener than anything else. In no other place does Jesus speak with such solemnity; nowhere else does he enunciate so many moral, clear, and comprehensible rules, appealing so straight to the heart of every man; nowhere else does he speak to a greater or more various mass of simple folk. If there be any clear and definite rules of Christian conduct, here it is that they must be found. In these three chapters of Matthew, then, I sought the solution of my doubts.

Many and many a time did I read that Sermon, and each time with the same feeling of rapture and tender emotion, as I dwelt on those verses which bid one turn the left cheek to him who has smitten the right, to give up even our shirts to the spoiler, to be reconciled with all men, and to love our

enemies; but also as I read came the old feeling of dissatisfaction. The words of God were not clear. An impossible renunciation of everything, even of life itself, as I conceived it, was ordained; and this, it seemed to me, could not be the necessary condition of salvation. But, if this were not the necessary condition of salvation, then nothing was definite and clear. Nor did I only read the Sermon on the Mount; I read the Gospels, and the theological commentaries on them.

In most of these commentaries the Sermon on the Mount is explained as indicating the perfection to which man should aspire, though, poor fallen creature, in bondage to sin, he is incapable of reaching that perfection, and can be saved only by faith, prayer, and divine grace.

But such explanations did not satisfy me, because it had always seemed strange that Jesus should have given such clear and beautiful rules directly applicable to every individual, well knowing the impossibility of his teaching being carried into practice by the unassisted strength of man.

Whenever I read them, they always seemed to apply directly to myself, and to demand of me personally their fulfilment. At every reading I felt a joyful confidence that I at once, from that very moment, had it in me to do all this.

I longed to do this; I strove to do it; but, whenever I found the struggle hard, then unwittingly came back the teaching of the Church: that man is weak and cannot of his own strength do such things:—and my will became weak.

I was told to believe and pray. I felt, however, that I believed so little; that I could not pray. I was told to pray that God might give me faith, the faith which should create that prayer, which in turn creates the faith, which creates the prayer, and so on without end.

But reason and experience both showed me that these means were insufficient. The only true way, I felt, was to be found in my own efforts to fulfil the teaching of Jesus.

And thus after long and vain seeking, after the study of all that has been written to prove the divinity of this teaching, and of its non-divinity, after many doubts and much suffering, I again remained alone with my heart and the book of mystery before me. I could not give to the book the meaning which others did; I could neither find a sense different from theirs, nor could I renounce the book. Only when I had lost all confidence in the interpretations both of learned critics and of theologians, and had thrown them all aside, in accordance with those words of Jesus, "Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven" —only then did I at once understand what I had misunderstood before.

And all was made plain to me, not through any clever and profound transposition, comparison, or interpretation; but by forgetting all interpretations whatever. The passage which was to me the key that unlocked the whole was contained in two verses, the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth of the fifth chapter of Matthew: "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not him¹ that is evil." Suddenly, for the first time, I understood these words directly and simply, as though I had read them for the first time. I understood that Jesus really means what he says. And at once, not as if something new had appeared, but as if all that obscured the truth had fallen away, the truth itself arose before me in its full meaning. "Ye

¹ The word used is *πονηρός*, translated "him that is evil" (margin "evil"), and in chap. vi. 13, "the evil one."

have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, *Resist not him that is evil.*" These words suddenly seemed to me to take new being, as if I had never heard them before.

Formerly, in reading this passage, through some strange mental darkness I had always overlooked the words, "But I say unto you, *Resist not him that is evil,*" as though these words had not been there, or had no definite meaning.

Often when conversing with men who knew the Gospel well, have I noticed the same mental darkness with respect to these words. No one remembered them, and even professing Christians would often turn to the Gospel to verify their very existence.

And so I, too, used to overlook these words, and to pay attention only to what follows: "but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." And these words had always in my fancy implied an acquiescence in suffering and privation, inconsistent with human nature. They moved me, I felt that it would be an excellent thing to put them into practice; but I also felt that I should never have strength to act so merely for the action's sake, for the mere sake of suffering. I said to myself: "Well, I will turn the other cheek—I shall be beaten again; I will give—all will be taken from me. My life will not be mine. But life has been given me, why should I lose it? Jesus cannot demand that."

Thus I spoke to myself at one time, supposing that Jesus in these words praises suffering and privation, and that in thus praising them he spoke with exaggeration, and not precisely or clearly. But now that the true significance of these words, "Resist not evil," is clear to me, I see that Jesus exaggerates nothing, that he demands no suffering suffering's sake, but only very definitely and

very clearly means what indeed he says. He says, "Resist not evil, and in so doing, know well that there may be men, who, having struck you on one cheek without meeting resistance, will strike you on the other; who, having robbed you of your coat, will strip the shirt from your back also; who, having profited by your labour, will force you to labour again; who will seize all, and return nothing. And, even if it be thus, see that you still resist not evil. To those who beat and injure you, still render good for evil." And when I had understood these words in their simple meaning, all that had been dark grew light, and all that I had thought exaggerated I saw to be exact. Then for the first time I understood that the essence of the idea is to be found in the words, "resist not evil"; while all that follows only explains that commandment. I understood that Jesus in no way commands me to turn the other cheek and to give up my coat, for sheer suffering's sake; but commands me not to resist evil, and warns me that my obedience may entail suffering.

Even so a father, when he sends his son on a long journey, does not order him not to sleep by night, nor yet to eat insufficient food, nor to get wet nor cold, when he says, "Go thy way, and if thou hast to suffer from wet and cold, do not the less continue thy way." Jesus does not say, "Turn your cheek to the smiter, to suffer." But he does say, "In all circumstances, resist not evil; whatever happen, resist it not." These words, "Resist not evil," or "him that is evil," understood in their literal significance, were to me verily the master-key. I was astonished that I could have so grossly misunderstood words so clear and definite. "You are told, a tooth for a tooth; but I say, Resist not him that is evil; whatever evil be done unto thee, have patience; let that which is taken from thee,

go freely." What can be clearer, more comprehensible, more free from doubt, than this?

Then with this understanding came also a clear comprehension of all the teaching of Jesus, not only in the Sermon on the Mount, but throughout the Gospels; then all that before had seemed obscure became intelligible, all that had seemed contradictory became harmonious, and, above all, what had appeared superfluous became necessary. All the parts were fused into one whole, and without any possibility of doubt confirmed one another, as the fragments of the broken statue rightly fitted together. In this Sermon, and throughout all the Gospels, I found universal confirmation of the teaching, "Resist not evil."

In this sermon, and everywhere else, Jesus represents his disciples, that is to say, those who carry out his rule of not resisting evil, as men who turn the other cheek, who give up their garments, — as men who are persecuted, beaten, and poor.

Here and everywhere Jesus says over and over again, that he who has not taken up his cross, has not renounced all, cannot be his disciple; no one, that is to say, who is not prepared for all the consequences of obedience to the rule, Resist not Evil. Jesus bids his disciples be poor, and ready to undergo persecution, suffering, and death, without resisting evil. Without resisting evil he himself prepares for suffering and death, and drives Peter from his presence for murmuring at the command; and he himself dies reiterating it, in unflinching constancy to his own teaching.

All his earlier disciples obeyed this rule, spent their lives in poverty and persecution, and never returned evil for evil.

It follows that Jesus meant what indeed he said. It may be affirmed that the constant fulfilment of this rule is difficult, and that not every man will

find his happiness in obeying it. It may be said that it is foolish; that, as unbelievers pretend, Jesus was a visionary, an idealist, whose impracticable rules were only followed because of the stupidity of his disciples. But it is impossible not to admit that Jesus did say very clearly and definitely that which he intended to say: namely, that men should not resist evil; and that therefore he who accepts his teaching cannot resist. Nevertheless, neither believers, nor unbelievers, understand these words of Jesus in this clear and simple sense.

CHAPTER II

THE CENTRAL DOCTRINE

WHEN I understood that the words, "Resist not Evil," mean Resist not Evil, all my previous ideas of Christ's meaning were suddenly changed; and I was terrified, not so much at my former ignorance of his teaching as at the strange misinterpretation which had been mine. I knew, we all know, that the essence of Christianity is love. To say, "Turn the other cheek to the smiter, Love your enemies," is to express the vital principle of Christianity. I had known this from childhood; but why had I not understood these simple words simply, without seeking in them an allegorical sense? "Resist not evil," means "Resist not evil at any time"; that is to say, "Never employ force, never do what is contrary to love; and if men still offend you, put up with the offence; employ no force against force." It would be impossible to speak more clearly and simply than this. How, then, could I, believing as I believed, or at least endeavoured to believe, that he who thus spoke is God — how could I have ever

said that to carry this out is above my strength, is impossible? The master says to me: "Go and cut wood," and I answer: "I cannot do it of my unaided strength." Saying this I mean one of two things: either that I disbelieve the words of the master, or that I do not want to do as he commands me. The commandment of God, which He gives us to fulfil, of which He says that he who fulfils and teaches it shall be called great; and again, that only those who do so fulfil it shall enter into life,—this commandment, fulfilled by Himself, by Himself expressed with a clearness and simplicity which leave no doubt as to its meaning, this commandment I, without even once having endeavoured to fulfil it, have declared to be beyond my own unaided strength, have declared impossible of fulfilment except with supernatural assistance.

We are taught that God came upon earth to bring salvation to man, and that salvation lies in this, that the Second Person of the Trinity, God the Son, suffered for man, redeemed his sins before the Father, and gave him a Church in which is preserved divine grace, transferable by her to those who believe. And yet more than all this, we are taught that God the Son gave to man both the teaching and the living example necessary for salvation. How, then, could I say that the rules of life, expressed by him so simply and so clearly for all, were impossible of fulfilment without supernatural assistance? He not only did not say this, but he said positively, "Except ye do this, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." So far from making allowances for the difficulty, he said: "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," and John the Evangelist has said that his commandments are not heavy. How, then, could I say that God's commandment, so clearly stated to be easily obeyed, the commandment which He himself as man fulfilled, which His first followers fulfilled after Him,

how could I say that obedience was difficult, was even impossible without supernatural assistance?

If a man gave all the powers of his mind to the repeal of a law, what could he say stronger than this, that it was impossible to carry it out, that in the mind of the law-giver himself it could be obeyed only with supernatural assistance? Yet this is what I thought about the commandment not to resist evil.

Then I began to recall whence and when that strange idea, that the law of Jesus was divine, but impossible of fulfilment, first came into my mind; and on reflection I saw that it had never fairly come to me in all its nakedness (for then it would have repelled me), but that I had unconsciously sucked it in with my mother's milk, and that all my subsequent life had only strengthened in me this strange error.

From childhood I had been taught that Christ is God, and his teaching divine, but at the same time I had been also taught to respect those institutions which secured by force my safety against evil men, and to consider them sacred. I was taught to withstand him that is evil; it was instilled into me that it was humiliating and shameful to submit to the evil man, and to suffer by him; and that to resist him was worthy of praise. I was taught to judge and to condemn. I was also taught to make war, that is to say, to oppose evil by murder; the army to which I belonged was called a Christian army, and its actions were sanctified by Christian benediction.

From childhood until manhood I was taught to respect what is directly contrary to the law of Christ. To withstand the offender by force, to avenge insults whether personal, family, or national; all this was not only sanctioned, but I was taught to admire it, and to consider it in accordance with the law of Jesus.

All that surrounded me: the quiet, my personal safety, the safety of my family, my property, all were based on the law rejected by Jesus; the law of "a tooth for a tooth."

The leaders of the Church taught that the words of Jesus were divine, but that, through human frailty, their fulfilment was impossible without the additional gift of grace. The teachers of the world, the whole system of society, openly acknowledged the impracticability, the fancifulness of this teaching of Christ, and both by speech and act upheld what was contrary to it.

This professed impracticability unconsciously took such hold of me, became such a part of my mental habit, and was in such entire accordance with my lusts, that I never once became aware of the contradiction in which I was involved. I did not see that it was impossible at one and the same time to confess the God-Christ, the foundation of whose teaching is non-resistance to evil, and yet consciously and calmly labour for the establishment of property, tribunals, kingdoms, and armies; for the establishment of a life *contrary* to the teaching of Christ, and yet to pray to the same Christ to be enabled to fulfil among men this law of non-resistance to evil and forgiveness of injuries.

Clear as it now is to me, I never in those days saw how much simpler it would be to arrange and maintain our life in harmony with this law of Jesus, and then to pray for tribunals, punishments, and wars, if such things were found truly essential to our welfare.

And I understood whence arose my error. It arose from professing Christ in word, and in deed denying him.

The law of non-resistance to evil is one which unites all this teaching into one indivisible whole; but only when it is not regarded merely as an

aphorism, only when it is a vital rule,—only when it is Law.

It is indeed a key which will open all doors, but only when it is pushed firmly into the lock. To consider this rule as an aphorism, impossible to be carried into practice without supernatural aid, is to abrogate the whole teaching. What can the teaching from which the essence has been taken seem to men but an impossibility? To unbelievers it even seems foolish; nay, to them it cannot well seem otherwise.

To get the engine ready, to heat the boiler, to set all in motion, but to forget to put on the connecting strap, would be to do what has been done with the teaching of Jesus, when we are taught that we may be Christians while discarding the rule of non-resistance to evil.

Not long ago I read the fifth chapter of Matthew with a Hebrew Rabbi. At nearly every sentence the Rabbi exclaimed, "That is in the Bible; that is in the Talmud too;" and both in the Bible and the Talmud he showed me passages very similar to the words of the Sermon on the Mount. But, when we came to the verse about non-resistance to evil, he did not say, "And that is in the Talmud," but only asked me with a smile, "And do Christians fulfil that? Do they turn the other cheek?" I had nothing to reply, for I knew very well that at that very time Christians not only were not turning the other cheek, but were smiting the cheeks of Hebrews turned to them. I was curious, however, to know whether any similar expression was to be found either in the Bible, or the Talmud, and I put the question to him. He answered, "No, there is not; but tell me whether Christians fulfil that law or not." By this question he asserted that the existence of a rule in the Christian law which is not only neglected by Christians, but claimed by them

to be incapable of fulfilment, is a confession of its senselessness and uselessness. And I had no answer for him.

Now that I understand the true meaning of this doctrine, I see clearly the strange contradictions in which I was involved. Confessing Christ to be God and his teaching to be divine, and yet at the same time regulating my life by rules directly opposed to that law, what else was left me but to acknowledge his teaching impracticable? In word I accepted the teaching of Jesus as sacred, but in deed I professed something wholly different,—I acknowledged and worshipped institutions which were un-Christian, and which on every side enclosed my life.

The Old Testament throughout speaks of the misfortunes of the Jews as due to their belief in false gods instead of the one true God. Samuel, in the eighth and twelfth chapters of his first book, accuses the people of having added a new form to the many by which they had so often forsaken God; in the place of God, who had been their King, they had set up a man-king, able, as they thought, to save them. "And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things," says Samuel to the people (chap. xii. 21), "which cannot profit nor deliver, for they are vain." "That you may not perish with your king, serve the Lord alone."

And thus a belief in these "vain things," these empty idols, had turned me aside from the truth. Between the truth and myself, obscuring its light, obstructing my steps, were these "vain things," to renounce which I had not strength.

The other day I happened to walk through the Borovitsky Gate (in Moscow). In the gateway sat an old and crippled beggar with his head wrapped in a rag. I took out my purse to give him a trifle. At that moment a smart-looking, ruddy young

fellow, in a grenadier's uniform, came running down from the Kremlin. On seeing him the beggar started up in a fright, and hobbled away as fast as he could down towards the Alexander Garden. The grenadier gave chase, but, not gaining on him, stopped, and abused him with shouts for having broken the regulations by sitting in the gateway. I waited for the grenadier, and when he came up, asked if he had learnt to read.

"Yes, I have. What then?"

"Have you read the Gospel?"

"I have."

"Well, have you read the passage, 'And he who feeds the hungry . . . ?'" And I quoted the words.

He knew it, and listened to me. I saw that he was puzzled. Two passers-by stopped to listen. The grenadier evidently felt it rather hard that, when he had done his duty well by driving people away according to his orders, he should suddenly appear to be in the wrong. He was confused, and was evidently seeking for an excuse. Suddenly a light shone in his intelligent black eyes; he turned away from me as if going. "And have you read the military regulations?"

I answered that I had not done so.

"Then hold your tongue!" said he, shaking his head triumphantly, as, wrapping his fur coat round him, he stalked proudly to his post.

This was the only man I had ever met in my life who with strict logic had decided the eternal question, which, in our actual social state, lay before me, and lies before every man calling himself a Christian.

CHAPTER III

JESUS AND THE STATE

It is said, and said in vain, that the Christian teaching only concerns personal salvation, and does not touch matters of general interest, nor State questions. This is a bold and unfounded assertion, the falsity of which is self-evident, and which the first serious consideration must refute.

"Very well," I say to myself, "I will not personally resist evil; I will turn the other cheek; but what am I to do should the troops of an enemy invade us, or a nation be oppressed, and I be called upon to take part in the strife against evil—am I to go and kill?" And I cannot avoid answering the question, "Which am I to serve? God, or the 'things which are vain'?"—to go to the war or not to go?

I am a peasant; I am elected to office in my village as a judge, a juryman; I am compelled to take oaths, to try offenders, to punish them—what am I to do? Again I must choose between the law of God and the law of man.

I am a monk, living in a monastery; the peasants have carried off our hay, and I am sent to take part in the strife against evil, to bring the peasants to justice. Again I must choose.

No man can escape from the decision of this question.

I do not speak of the class to which I myself belong, its activity being almost entirely devoted to the resistance of evil, in military, judicial, or civil functions. But there is not one private individual, however modest his position, who may not be called upon to make his decision between serving God by the fulfilment of His command-

ments, and serving "things which are vain" in the institution of the State. My individual life is bound up with that of the State, and the latter requires of me an un-Christian activity contrary to the commandments of Jesus. At present, with universal military service, and with the legal obligation of all to be jurymen, the dilemma in its rudest, most uncompromising form, is before us all. Every one has to take the instruments of murder, the gun and the sword, or, if we have not actually to kill, must load the gun and sharpen the sword; that is to say, must get ready for murder. Every citizen must come to the courts, must take his share in the administration of justice and in punishment; in short, one and all must reject the commandment of Jesus not to resist evil; and that not only by words, but in deed.

The question of the grenadier: The Gospel or the military regulations? The law of God or the law of man? stands now, as it stood in the days of Samuel, before mankind. It stood before Jesus himself and his disciples. It stands now before those who wish to be Christians; and it stood before me.

The law of Jesus, with its teaching of love, humility, and self-sacrifice, had always touched my heart, had always irresistibly attracted me. But on all sides—in history, in the actual facts which surrounded me, in my own life—I saw a law the very opposite, repugnant to my heart, to my conscience, to my reason, but giving full play to my animal instincts. I felt that, were I to accept the law of Jesus, I should stand alone, and it might be ill with me. Before me lay persecution and weeping, as Jesus himself said. Should I accept the law of man all would approve me. I should be tranquil, secure, with all the highest mental faculties sharpened to assist in quieting my conscience. I should laugh and rejoice, as Jesus himself also said.

I felt this, and consequently not only did not allow myself to dwell on the meaning of the law of Jesus, but endeavoured to understand it so that it should not hinder my animal life. To understand it, however, in such a way was not possible,—and so I did not understand it at all.

In this misunderstanding I came to a state of mental darkness which now surprises me. As an example of this darkness I will give my former comprehension of the words, "Judge not, that ye be not judged" (Matt. vii. 1). "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged" (Luke vi. 37).

The judicial institutions, in which I had shared and which protected my property and person, appeared to me undoubtedly sacred, and so clearly not destructive of the law of God, that the possibility of the above sentence meaning anything beyond a prohibition of "speaking evil" of one's neighbour never entered my head. It never occurred to me that Jesus in these words might have spoken of courts of justice, of the courts of the Zemstvo, of the criminal court, of district and magistrates' courts, of all senates and State departments. It was only when I understood the words, "Resist not evil" in their plain sense, that the question arose in my mind, "How would Jesus himself have behaved towards all tribunals and State departments?" And, seeing that he would have had to deny them, I asked myself, "Does not that mean, not only that we must not judge our neighbour verbally, but also that we must not condemn him through any court of justice; that we must not judge our neighbour in any human tribunal?"

In Luke (vi. 37-49) these very words are uttered, immediately after those which teach us not to resist evil but to return good for evil. Immediately after the words, "Be ye merciful, even as your Father is merciful," it is said, "And judge not, and ye shall

not be judged: and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned." "Does not this mean," I said to myself, "that not only should we not condemn our neighbour verbally, but that tribunals for the judgment of our neighbours are not to be established?" It was only necessary for me to put the question, and both my heart and common sense at once answered it in the affirmative.

I know well how startling such an interpretation of these words is at first. Certainly it startled me. To show how far I was from a right understanding, I will confess to a shameful piece of foolishness. Even after I had become a believer, and had read the Gospel as a divine book, when I met my friends among lawyers and judges I would say to them by way of a playful joke, "So you still keep on judging, and yet it is said, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.'" I felt so certain that these words could have been uttered only against slander and the like that I did not understand the horrible sacrilege of which I myself was guilty. It had actually happened, that persuaded these clear words meant something other than they do, I had used them in jest in their true significance.

I will relate in detail how all my doubts about the meaning of these words were removed; how I came to perceive that they could mean nothing but that Jesus forbade all earthly tribunals of justice, and that when he made use of them, that, and that only, must have been his meaning.

The first thing which astounded me, when I had understood the commandment of non-resistance to evil in its simple sense, was that earthly courts of justice, not only are not in accordance with, but are directly contrary to it, contrary also to the spirit of the whole teaching, and that consequently if Jesus thought of these tribunals he must have condemned them.

Jesus says, "Resist not evil": the object of the courts is to resist evil. Jesus says, "Return good for evil": the courts render evil for evil. Jesus says, "Do not classify men as good or bad": the courts are occupied only in making this distinction. Jesus says, "Forgive all men; forgive not once, not seven times, but without end; love your enemies, do good to those that hate you": the courts do not forgive, but punish; they render not good but evil to those whom they call the enemies of society.

So that it comes to this, that Jesus must have forbidden all courts of justice. But perhaps, thought I, Jesus had no dealings with earthly tribunals, and did not think of them. But then I saw that this could not be. Jesus throughout his life on earth was constantly hampered by the courts of Herod, by the Sanhedrin, and by the high priests. Moreover, I saw that Jesus often spoke directly of judgments as evils. He warns his disciples that they will be judged, and tells them how to behave when before the judgment-seat. He foretells his own condemnation, and shows in his own person how we should regard earthly tribunals. It follows, then, that Jesus *did* think of these tribunals, which were to condemn himself and his disciples, which have condemned and are condemning millions of men. Jesus saw this evil, and directly pointed to it. He directly denies the justice of the sentence against the adulteress, on the ground that man has no right to judge because he is himself guilty. He repeats this idea several times, saying that the eye with a beam in it should not behold the mote in the eye of another, that the blind should not lead the blind lest both fall into the ditch.

Yet may it not be that in his reproof of the sentence on the adulteress, and in his application of the parable of the beam and the mote to the general weakness of mankind, he still did not forbid

our appeal to earthly justice for defence against evil men? But I see that in no way can this be admitted.

In the Sermon on the Mount, addressing himself to all, he says: "And if any would go to law with thee to take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." Therefore he forbids every one to go to law.

But it may be that Jesus spoke only of the personal relation of the individual to the courts of law, not denying the administration of justice itself, and admitting into a Christian society those who sit as judges in established tribunals? But I see that this also can in no way be admitted. Jesus in his prayer enjoins on all men without exception to forgive others, that they may have their own trespasses forgiven; and this idea he repeats many times. It follows, then, that every man before bringing his offering of prayer is bound to pardon all trespassers. How can a man, who by his profession of faith is bound to pardon all who have done wrong, judge and sentence by law? To me, therefore, it is clear that by the teaching of Jesus, a Christian cannot be a punishing judge.

But it may be, from the connection which the words "judge not" and "condemn not" have with others, that in this passage Jesus, when he said "judge not," did not think of earthly courts? This, however, is also not so; on the contrary, it is clear by the context and the discourse itself that in saying "judge not," Jesus *did* mean to speak of courts and tribunals. According to Matthew and Luke, before saying "judge not," and "condemn not," he said, "Resist not evil, bear with evil, do good to all men." Before these words, according to Matthew, he repeated the saying of the Hebrew law, "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." And after this reference to the criminal law, he said, "But

do not ye so, Resist not evil"; and again after that he says, "Judge not." It surely follows that Jesus *did* speak of the earthly criminal law, and *did* condemn it in the words, "judge not."

Again, according to Luke he said not only, "Do not judge," but, "Do not judge, and do not condemn." These words, having almost the same meaning, must have been added for a special purpose; they could have had only one object, to explain the significance of those which went before.

If he had wished to say "Do not condemn your neighbour," he would have added that word; but he says only, "Do not condemn." And he adds, "and ye shall not be condemned: release, and ye shall be released."

But, after all, Jesus in these words may not have alluded to courts of law; and I may be maintaining my own false interpretation of this passage?

I inquire, then, how the earlier disciples of Jesus, the apostles, looked upon the courts of this world. Did they accept them? Did they approve of them?

In chap. iv., and in the eleventh and twelfth verses, the Apostle James says: "Speak not one against another, brethren. He that speaketh against a brother, or judgeth his brother, speaketh against the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judgest the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. One only is the law-giver and judge, even he who is able to save and to destroy: but who art thou that judgest thy neighbour?"

The word which is here translated by "speaking against," and in Russian by "to slander, or speak evil of," is *καταλαλέω*. Now a simple reference to the lexicon shows us that the real meaning of the word is to "accuse." The translation is, "He that speaketh against" (speaketh evil of) "his brother, speaketh against" (slandereth) "the law," and one involuntarily asks, why? Whatever evil I may

speak of my brother, I do not necessarily speak evil of the State law. But if I accuse and bring my brother before the judgment-seat, it is evident that I condemn the law of Jesus; I account the law of Jesus insufficient, and in so doing I accuse and judge the law. Clearly, then, I do not fulfil the law of Jesus, I am myself a judge. The judge, says James, is he who is able to save. How, then, can I, who am unable to save, be a judge, or take it upon me to punish?

The whole passage is directed against human judgments in courts of law, and repudiates them.

The whole of this epistle breathes the same spirit. In it (ii. 1-13) we read, "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou here, or sit under my footstool; are ye not divided in your own mind, and become judges with evil thoughts? Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he promised to them that love him? But ye have dishonoured the poor man. Do not the rich oppress you, and themselves drag you before the judgment-seats? Do not they blaspheme the honourable name by the which ye are called? Howbeit if ye fulfil the royal law according to the Scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well; but if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, being convicted by the law as transgressors. For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all. For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou

dost not commit adultery, but killest, thou art become a transgressor of the law. So speak ye, and so do as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty. For judgment is without mercy to him that hath showed no mercy : mercy glorieth against judgment.' These last words, "mercy glorieth against judgment," have often been translated, "mercy must be upheld in judgment" — a rendering which implies that judgment by Christians is lawful, but that it must be a judgment of mercy.

James admonishes the brethren to make no distinction of persons. "If you have regard to persons, then you are divided in your mind, like the judges of the tribunals, with evil thoughts. You have decided that the poor man is the worse; on the contrary, it is the rich man. He both oppresses you, and drags you before the judgment-seat. If you live by the law of love to your neighbour, by the law of mercy" (which, by way of distinction, James calls the royal law), "then it is well. But if you have regard to persons, and make distinction among men, then you become transgressors against the law of mercy." Further, having probably in view the example of the adulteress, whom they brought to Christ in order to stone her to death according to the law, or else in general allusion to the crime of adultery, James says, that he who punishes an adulteress by death is guilty of murder, and breaks the eternal law; for the same eternal law forbids adultery and murder. He says, *Act as men that are to be judged by a law of liberty.* For there is no mercy for him that doth not show mercy, and *consequently mercy destroys judgment.*

Can words be more clear, more definite? Here are forbidden, all distinction of persons, every judgment on individuals as good or bad. Here is a direct reference to earthly tribunals as undoubtedly bad, a distinct affirmation that the judgments of such

tribunals are criminal in themselves because they inflict punishment for crime, and that the justice of human laws is at once annihilated by God's law—the law of mercy.

I read the Apostle Paul, he who suffered before many tribunals, and I find in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Romans that he admonishes them of their vices and errors, and among the rest names their administration of justice, ver. 32, "Who, knowing the ordinance of God that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them."

Chap. ii. 1-4. "Wherefore thou art without excuse, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest dost practise the same things. And we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against them that practise such things. And reckonest thou this, O man, who judgest them that practise such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?"

The Apostle Paul says: that they, knowing the rightful judgment of God, act unjustly, and teach others to do the same, and therefore the man who judges cannot be justified.

This, then, is the opinion of the apostles on tribunals as expressed in their epistles; and in actual life, as we know, they had to submit to these tribunals as to evils and trials to be borne with fortitude and in obedience to the will of God.

Any one who attempts to realize to himself the position of the early Christians among the Pagans, will easily understand how impossible it was for them to forbid the tribunals which persecuted them. They could only, as occasion offered, oppose this

evil by denying the principle on which it rested; and that they did.

From the writings of the earliest teachers of the Church I learn that they invariably distinguished their teaching from all others by never admitting in it either compulsion or judgment.

Both Athenagoras and Origen, for example, emphasize the fact that they, while themselves enduring patiently the cruelties of man's justice, never in their turn sought to put in motion the engines of the law. The martyrs by their acts professed the same doctrine. Throughout all Christendom up to the time of Constantine these tribunals were regarded in no other light than an evil to be patiently borne. No Christian of that age would have thought it compatible with his Christianity to take a part in the administration of the law.

All my studies have shown me that the words of Jesus, "Judge not," and "Condemn not," were understood by his first disciples as I now understand them, in their simple meaning,—“Take no part whatever in the administration of the law.”

I was thus confirmed in my conviction that the words, "Judge not," and "Condemn not," were to be taken in their most practical sense, beyond all possibility of doubt. But the interpretation, "speaking evil against our neighbour," had been so generally accepted, and courts of law had so boldly and self-confidently flourished in all Christian states, and under the shelter of the Church itself, that I long doubted the justice of my own interpretation. There must be some ground for the general interpretation, I thought, for the establishment by Christians of courts of justice; there must be something which I do not understand. There must exist grounds on which these words are understood to mean evil-speaking, grounds on which Christian courts of justice are established.

Then I turned to see how the Church interpreted these words, and I found that from the fifth century downwards, the Church had taken them as referring to the verbal condemnation of our neighbour—to slander.

Now, when these words are taken only in that sense, there arises this difficulty: How is it possible *not* to condemn? It is impossible not to condemn evil, and the question therefore rests on this: What may and what may not be condemned?

It has been said, by Chrysostom and Theophilus, that these words cannot apply to the servants of the Church, inasmuch as the apostles themselves judged. It has also been said, that the allusion was probably to the Jews, who accused their neighbour of small offences, and themselves committed greater. But nowhere is a word said concerning human institutions and tribunals, or the relation in which they stand to the prohibition: "Judge not."

Does Christ forbid tribunals or does he sanction them? The absence of all answers to this natural question suggests that it must have been held self-evident, that as soon as a Christian is in the seat of judgment, he has then the right not only to judge, but even to condemn to death.

I turned to the Greek, Catholic, and Protestant writers, to those of the school of Tübingen and of the historical school. By all, even by the freest thinkers among them, the words in question were understood as a prohibition of slander. But why, contrary to the whole teaching of Jesus, are these words understood in such a narrow sense that the prohibition of slander does not include the prohibition of courts of justice? Why should it be supposed that Jesus, while forbidding as an evil thing the condemnation of our neighbour by words involuntarily breaking from the lips, does not regard as evil, and does not forbid the very same condemnation, when

accomplished deliberately, and accompanied by the use of force against the one condemned? To this there is no answer; there is not the slightest hint that the word "Condemnation" may include the sentences of those tribunals from which millions suffer. Nay, owing to these very words, "Judge not," and "Condemn not," theologians have found it necessary to explain carefully the cruel processes of legal trials, reminding us, that in Christian kingdoms the administration of justice must exist co-equally with the law of Jesus.

When I had satisfied myself of this, I began to doubt the sincerity of the interpretations, and I turned to what I ought to have begun with, to the translation of the words "Judge not," and "Condemn not."

In the original text the words are κρίνω and καταδικάζω. The incorrect translation of the word καταλαλέω in the Epistle of James, by "evil speaking," confirmed my doubts of the correctness of the translation. On comparing the different translations of the words κρίνω and καταδικάζω, I found that the Vulgate renders the word condemn by "condammar"; it is the same in French; in Slavonic it is "to condemn"; while Luther translates it "verdammen—to curse."

The difference between these translations increased my doubts, and I asked myself, what can be the exact meaning of the Greek word κρίνω, used in both Matthew and Luke, and of the word καταδικάζω, used in Luke, who wrote, according to the opinion of scholars, a good Greek style. How would it be translated by a man who knew nothing of the Gospel-teaching nor of its interpretations, and had only before him this one sentence?

On consulting a lexicon, I found that this word κρίνω has many different meanings. It often means—to pass sentence on, or even to condemn to death;

but never to speak evil of. In the glossary to the New Testament I found that the word is there often used to signify the sentence of a tribunal, sometimes to express the idea of choice, but never that of speaking evil. Thus I saw that the word κρίνω may be translated in many different ways, but that by which it is made to mean evil-speaking, or slander, is the most fanciful and unauthorised of all.

I then examined the word καταδικάζω, which follows the word κρίνω, as it is evident that the former word was added in order to qualify the meaning in which the latter was used. I opened an ordinary lexicon and found that the word καταδικάζω never has any other meaning than to sentence as a judge to punishment, or to death. I then again referred to the concordance and found that this word is used four times in the New Testament and always in the sense of "to condemn by law—to execute." I examined the context, and found that this word is used by James (v. 6), where he says, "Ye have condemned, ye have killed the righteous one." Here the word condemned is this same word καταδικάζω, and is used in allusion to the legal condemnation of Jesus. This word is never used in any other sense throughout the whole of the New Testament, nor in any Greek writings.

How is this, then? Have I lost my senses? Were we only to reflect on the lot which befalls so many, I, and every one living in our present society, would be horrified by the sufferings and wrongs which human criminal laws bring into human life, an evil alike for the judge and the judged from the punishments of a Khenghiz Khan or of a French Revolution, to those of our own days.

No man with a heart in him can have escaped this sense of horror, and of doubt in the existence of good, when he has heard these things related; or, worse still, when he has been a witness of the

execution of man by man, or when he has even looked upon the instruments of death: the guillotine and the gallows.

In the Gospel, whose every word we receive as sacred, it is directly and clearly said, "You have a criminal law, 'A tooth for a tooth,' but I give you a new law, 'Resist not evil'; let all men fulfil this commandment; return not evil for evil, but do good to all men at all times, and forgive all men."

No less clearly is it said, "Judge not." And as if to make any misunderstanding of the words impossible, it is added, "Do not sentence to punishment by the law."

My heart says to me distinctly and intelligibly, "Do not punish." Science says, "Do not punish; the more punishment, the greater evil." Reason says, "Do not punish; evil cannot be extirpated by evil." The word of God, in which I believe, tells me the same. And after studying the teaching in its entirety, after reading the words, "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; and condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned; release, and ye shall be released," I admit them to be the words of God, and then explain them to mean that we should not occupy ourselves with tittle-tattle and slander,—and continue to class courts of justice among Christian institutions, and to be myself a judge among Christian people!

And I was horrified by the grossness of the deceit which had enveloped me.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST STEP

I UNDERSTOOD at last what Jesus meant when he said, "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, Resist not evil." Jesus says, "It has been instilled into you, you have become accustomed to account it a good and reasonable thing, that you should withstand evil by force, and pluck out an eye for an eye, that you should establish courts of law, police officers, and soldiers, and that you should fight against your enemies; but I say unto you, Do no violence, take no part in violence, do evil to no one, not even to those whom you call your enemies."

I understood now that in laying down the proposition of non-resistance to evil, Jesus not only points out its immediate result to every man, but that in opposition to the principles prevailing from the time of Moses to his own, accepted by the Roman Law, and still existing in the codes of the different nations, he also lays down this rule of non-resistance (which, according to his teaching, should be the binding principle of our social life), to free humanity from the evils wrought by itself. He says to mankind, "You think that your laws correct evil; they only increase it. There is one only way of extirpating evil—to return good to all men without distinction. You have tried your principle for thousands of years; try now mine, which is the reverse."

It has often happened to me of late to speak with men of all conditions about this law of Christ's, Non-Resistance to evil. I have met, though seldom, with some who agreed with me, but, strange to say, there are two sorts who never admit, not even in

principle, the straightforward interpretation of that law, but warmly oppose its justice. These persons are at the two opposite poles of humanity : Christian conservative Patriots, who accept their Church as the true one ; and Revolutionary Atheists. Neither will consent to abandon the right of opposing by force what they consider to be evil. The wisest, the most learned among them, close their eyes to this simple and obvious truth, that if one man be suffered to oppose by violence what he considers evil, then another must be equally allowed to use violence against what to him is evil.

Not long ago I was allowed to see an instructive correspondence on this very subject between an Orthodox Slavophile and a Christian Revolutionist. The one stood out for war in the name of his oppressed Slavonic brethren, the other for revolution in the name of his oppressed brethren, the Russian peasants. Both appealed to force, and both relied on the teaching of Jesus.

The teaching of Jesus is understood in many different ways, but never in the one simple sense which alone can be obtained from his words.

We have arranged our whole life on the very principles which he denies ; we will not understand his teaching in its simple and direct meaning, and we assure ourselves and others, either that we do profess his teaching, or that it is unsuited to us. So-called Christians believe that Jesus is God, the Second Person of the Trinity, who came down upon earth to show men how to live, and they put in practice the most complicated details for the celebration of the sacraments, for the building of churches, for the sending forth of missionaries, the ordination of pastors, the government of their flocks, and the correction of errors of faith ; but one trifling circumstance they forget—to do what he taught. Unbelievers also in all ways essay to regulate their lives

not according to the law of Jesus, having agreed to hold that law unsuitable. No one will consent to attempt to do what he commanded. Nay, without even attempting it, both believers and unbelievers alike have decided that it is impossible.

He says with perfect clearness and simplicity: "The law of resistance to evil by violence, which you have made the principle of your lives, is false and unnatural." He gives another basis—the non-resistance of evil, which, according to his teaching, can alone deliver mankind from evil. He says: "You think that your laws of violence correct evil; they only increase it. For thousands of years you have tried to destroy evil by evil, and you have not destroyed but increased it. Do what I say, and you will know the truth of this."

He not only preached this, but throughout his life and in his death he practised as he preached.

Believers listen to all this, read it in their churches, call these words divine, call him God, but at the same time they say, "All this is very well, but it is impossible with our social state; it would derange our whole way of life, to which we are accustomed, which we love. Consequently we believe this only in the sense of an ideal, to be reached by prayer and faith in the Holy Communion, in the Redemption, and the Resurrection from the dead." Others, unbelievers, the free interpreters of the teaching of Christ, the historians of religion, Strauss, for example, Renan, and others, adopting completely the interpretation of the Church, say that the teaching of Jesus has no direct application to life, but is a visionary doctrine consoling to weak-minded men, and tell us seriously that though fit to be preached to the wild inhabitants of the by-places of Galilee, for us, with our culture, it presents only, in the words of Renan, the amiable dream "du charmant docteur."

According to their opinion Jesus was unable to rise to the wisdom of our present civilization and culture. Had he reached the intellectual height which these learned men have attained, he would not have spoken all that amiable nonsense about the birds of heaven, the turning of the other cheek to the smiter, and the taking thought only for the day. These wise historians judge of Christianity by what they see of it in our present society.

The Christianity of our society and our day accepts our present mode of life with all its arrangements: solitary confinement, imprisonment, music-halls, factories, newspapers, brothels, and parliaments, as true and sacred. And of the teaching of Christ only that portion is adopted not destructive to such a life. And as Jesus totally rejects such an existence, nothing is taken from his teaching but empty words. The learned historians see this fact, and having no need to conceal it, as the pretended believers have, they take this teaching of Jesus, bereft of its very essence, subject it to a profound criticism, with good reason reject it, and show that Christianity never was anything more than a visionary idea.

Before we judge the teaching of Jesus, it is surely necessary to know in what it consists. Before deciding whether his teaching be reasonable or not, to take what he said as he said it. This is precisely what we do not do, whether freethinkers or interpreters of the Church; and why we do not, we know very well.

We know very well that the teaching of Jesus rejected, and still rejects all those human errors, those "vain things" and hollow idols, which we, calling them churches, kingdoms, culture, science, art, civilization, think to exclude from his list of errors. But Jesus is against them all; his words exclude every "vain thing."

Not Jesus alone, but all the Hebrew prophets, like John the Baptist, all the truly wise men of the earth, speak of this same church, of these same kingdoms, of this culture, this civilization, as of an evil ruinous to man.

Let us suppose a builder to say to the master of a house, "Your house is bad, it requires to be altogether rebuilt," and then to go on to details, to explain how such and such beams are wanted, how they should be fashioned, where they should be put. The master pays no heed to the general proposition that his house is bad and should be rebuilt, but with feigned respect he listens to the builder's ideas for the rearrangement of the house. It is clear that the advice of the builder will appear unsuitable, and that he who thus refuses it his respect will end by calling it foolish. This is exactly how we are treating the teaching of Jesus.

For want of another illustration, I employed this. I then remembered that Jesus in his preaching himself employed it. He said, "I will destroy your temple, and in three days I will build another." For this he was crucified, and for this do they now crucify his teaching.

The least to be required of those who judge a particular set of doctrines, is that they should accept them in the sense in which they were understood by the teacher. But he understood his teaching, not as a far-fetched ideal of humanity, the fulfilment of which was impossible, not as a visionary poetical fancy with which to captivate the simple-minded folk of Galilee. To him, his teaching meant life; actual work which should save the race of man. It was no dreamer who hung on the cross, to suffer, to die for his teaching. In the same way many others have died and still will die. It cannot be said of such teaching that it is a dream of the fancy.

All teaching of the truth is fanciful to those who stray from it. We have come to this, that many (and I myself was of their number) say, "This teaching is visionary because it is unsuited to man's nature. It is against man's nature," they say, "when he is beaten on one cheek to turn the other, unnatural to give up what is our own to another, unnatural to work not for ourselves but for others. It belongs to a man," they say, "to take care of himself, of his own safety and of that of his family, to defend his property; in other words, it is natural for a man to fight for his existence. Learned jurists logically prove that the most sacred duty of man is to defend his rights; that is to say, to fight."

The moment, however, we dismiss the thought that the existing conditions of society as made by men are the best and most sacred of which human life is capable, the objection—that the teaching of Jesus is opposed to man's nature—immediately becomes an argument against the objectors. Who will dispute that to torture a dog, to kill a hen or a calf, much more to torture and kill a man, is contrary and painful to man's nature? I have known men to abstain from meat because they had themselves to kill the animals. Meanwhile human society is so constituted, that not a single personal good is obtained without the sufferings of others, and these sufferings are repugnant to our human nature.

The whole system of our social life, the complicated mechanism of our varied institutions, which all have violence for their aim, bear witness to the degree to which violence is contrary to human nature. Not a single judge will consent to strangle with a rope the man whom he has condemned to death in his court. No one of higher rank will consent to snatch a peasant from his weeping family

and shut him up in prison. No general, nor soldier, save in obedience to discipline, to his oath, and in time of war, would kill hundreds of Turks or Germans and destroy their villages; he would not so much as wound one of them.

These things are due to that complicated machinery of Society and the State, which makes it its first business to destroy the feeling of responsibility for such deeds, so that no man shall feel them to be as unnatural as they are. Some make laws, others apply them. Others again train men and educate them in the habit of discipline, in the habit, that is to say, of senseless and irresponsible obedience. Again others, and these are the best trained of all, practise every kind of violence, even to the slaying of men, without the slightest knowledge of the why and wherefore. We need only clear our minds for an instant from the network of human institutions in which we are thus entangled, to feel how adverse it all is to our true nature.

When we cease to affirm that this accustomed evil, the fruits of which we enjoy, is an immutable and divine truth, it becomes clear which of the two is the more natural and suitable to man—the law of violence or the law of Jesus. Am I to agree that the peace and safety of myself and my family, my joys and my happiness, are to be bought by beggary, by moral corruption, and by the suffering of millions of men; by the daily erection of the gallows, by hundreds and thousands of prisoners; by millions of soldiers torn from their families and made sottish by discipline, and by officers of police, who watch over my amusements with loaded arms turned against hungry men? Am I to buy each sweet morsel that I put into my mouth, or into the mouths of my children, with all this mass of human suffering, because without it no morsel is attainable? Or am I rather to think, that no morsel is mine

which is necessary to any one else, for which another suffers? I have only once to understand these things,—that each joy of mine, each instant of tranquillity in our present social state, is bought by the privations and suffering of the thousands who are the victims of violence: I have only to understand this, to be convinced of what is really fitted to the nature of man, to man not only as an animal, but as a reasoning being,—I have only to accept the law of Jesus in its true significance and with all its consequences, to understand that not only is the teaching of Jesus not contrary to human nature, but that it is itself a rejection of a teaching opposed to human nature,—that is, the fanciful doctrine of men about resistance to evil, which is really the cause of all their suffering.

Christ's teaching, "Resist not evil," a fanciful dream!

But is not what the life of men, men in whose souls has been placed the sense of pity and love, has undergone and is even now undergoing from the stake, wheels, the lash, mutilation, torture, chains, penal labour, the gallows, military executions, solitary confinement, prisons; what women and children endure through war, through periodical revolutions; what some have to suffer in carrying out all these horrors, and others in the attempt to avoid them, is not this a dreadful dream?

When we feel the teaching of Jesus, we see that this world of ours (not the world given by God for man to be happy in but a world created by men for their own ruin), is a dream, the wildest and most terrible of dreams, the wandering of a madman's mind, from which we need but once to awaken never again to return to its fearful visions.

God descended upon earth; the Son of God, one of the persons of the Holy Trinity, became Man, and redeemed the sin of Adam, they say. And

this God was obliged to say something mystic and mysterious, incomprehensible, to be understood only with the aid of faith and divine grace! And yet how simple, clear, and reasonable are these words of God! "Render not evil to one another, and evil will exist no more." Is then the revelation of God indeed so simple? Has He, indeed, said no more than this? So much surely we all knew.

The prophet Elijah hid himself from the wrath of men in a cave, and it was revealed to him that there he should see God. A storm arose, and the trees were broken by the wind. Elijah thought that this was God, and looked; but God was not there. A tempest followed, thunder and lightning; and Elijah came forth to see, but God was not there. Next there was an earthquake: fire came out from the earth, the rocks trembled and the hills were shaken. Elijah looked again, but God was not there. Last came a calm, and a light wind blew from the quiet fields. Elijah looked, and God was there. So come to us the simple words of God, "Resist not evil."

Simple they are, yet in them lies the law of God and of man, the single and eternal law. So true is it, that whatsoever progress towards the lessening of evil there has been in the history of mankind is due to those and those only who have understood the teaching of Christ, and have suffered evil without opposing it by violence. The progress of humanity towards good is accomplished not by its tormentors, but by its martyrs. As fire will not put out fire, so evil will not destroy evil. Good alone, untainted by evil, can overcome it. That this is so is a law of the human soul as immutable as the law of Galileo, nay, yet more immutable, more clear and complete. Men may fall away from it, may hide it from others, but the progress towards the good of humanity can be accomplished

through it alone. Each forward step is taken only in the name of non-resistance to evil.

The disciple of Christ can say in answer to all temptations and threats even with a greater certainty than Galileo, "‘It remains true for all that,’ that not with violence, but with returning good for evil shalt thou destroy evil."

If this advance be gradual, it is because the clearness, simplicity, and reasonableness, the necessity and inevitableness of the teaching of Jesus, are hidden from the greater part of mankind under the veil of cunning; most dangerously hidden under a pretended teaching which is falsely attributed to him.

CHAPTER V

JESUS AND THE MOSAIC LAW

EVERYTHING confirmed me in the truth of this new interpretation of the teaching of Jesus. It was long, however, before I could accustom myself to the strange idea, that after the law of Jesus had been preached for eighteen hundred years by so many men, after so many had devoted their lives to the study of this law, it had still to be discovered, as though it were a new one. But however strange, so it was. The teaching of Jesus not to resist evil arose before me as something completely new, something of which till that moment I had been supremely ignorant. I asked myself, why was this? I must have had some false perception of the meaning of Christ's teaching, to have so strangely misunderstood it. A false perception indeed it was!

When I turned again to the Gospel I was not in the position of a man who, having never heard of the teaching of Jesus, hears it suddenly for the first

time,—I had a whole system ready by which to judge it. Jesus was no longer to me a prophet unfolding a new and divine law, but one who completed and explained to me what I had long accepted as the certain law of God. I possessed already a complete, distinct, though complicated teaching, respecting God, the creation of the world and of man, and the commandments of God in the books of Moses.

In the Gospel I found the words: "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, Resist not evil." The words "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" were the commandment given by God to Moses. The words "resist not evil," embodied the new commandment which repealed the original one.

Had I simply considered the teaching of Jesus, apart from those theological theories which I had, as it were, sucked in with my mother's milk, I should have understood simply the simple meaning of his words; I should have understood that he rejects the old law and proclaims the new, which is his own. But it had been instilled into me, that Jesus does not reject the law of Moses, but on the contrary confirms it to the smallest point and completes it.

The verses of Matthew (v. 17-23), in which this is declared, had always struck me as obscure and perplexing. With the knowledge I then had of the Old Testament, and especially of the later books of Moses, so full of trifling, senseless, and often cruel rules, and each beginning with the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," it seemed to me a strange thing, and incomprehensible, that Jesus could confirm the law of Moses. I left that question, however, without deciding it. I went back to the belief, instilled into me from childhood, that both these laws were the work of the Holy Ghost; that they agree one with the other, and that Jesus in truth confirms the law of Moses, and completes it.

How and where he completed it, how to reconcile the obvious contradictions between the words of the Gospel, these verses (17-20), and the words, "But I say unto you," I had never clearly understood. No sooner, however, had I accepted the plain meaning of the teaching of Jesus than I saw that these two laws were contradictory, that there could be no question of their agreement, or of the completion of one by the other; that it is necessary to accept one of them; and that the interpretation of those verses of Matthew which had formerly struck me as obscure, was in truth a false interpretation.

When I again read the verses 17-19, their meaning was as clear as formerly it had been dark. Clear, not because I had thought of something new, or anything had been changed, but only because I had thrown aside an artificial interpretation which had become incorporated with the passage.

Jesus says (Matt. v. 17-19), "Think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished."

And he adds, ver. 20, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven."

He says, "I have not come to destroy the eternal law, for the fulfilment of which were written your holy books and your prophecies, but I have come to enjoin on you the execution of this law, and I speak, not of the law which your teachers the Pharisees call the law of God, but of that eternal law which is more immutable even than the earth and the heavens."

I express the meaning in other words only to divert the mind of the reader from the customary false

interpretation. Had this false interpretation not existed, it would be impossible to express the idea better and more distinctly than in these verses.

The interpretation that Jesus does not reject the law is based on this circumstance that the word law in this passage, thanks to a comparison with the "one jot or one tittle" of the written law, is unjustifiably, and contrary to the sense of the words, taken to imply the *written* law instead of the *eternal* law. But Jesus does not speak of the written law. If Jesus had so spoken in this passage, he would have employed the customary expression, the law and the prophets,—his invariable custom when using the word in that significance; but his expression is quite different, "the law *or* the prophets." If Jesus had here meant the written law, then, in the following verse, which is a continuation of the thought, he would have said, "the law *and* the prophets," and not used the word law alone as it there stands in the text.

Again, Jesus uses the same expression in the Gospel of Luke, in such a context that its meaning becomes indisputable. In chap. xvi. 15, he says to the Pharisees, who rely on justification through the written law, "Ye are they that justify yourselves in the sight of men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. *The law and the prophets* were until John: from that time the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it." Immediately afterwards (ver. 17) he says, "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tittle of the law to fall." By the words, "*The law and the prophets* until John," Jesus repeals the written law. By the words, "easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle *of the law* to fall," he declares the eternal law. In the former place he says, *the law and the prophets*; that is to say, *the written law*; in the latter place he

uses the single word *law*, and he means *the eternal law*. It follows clearly, then, that here the *eternal law* is placed in distinct opposition to the *written law*,¹ and that the same opposition is intended in Matthew, when the *eternal law* is indicated by the words, *the law or the prophets*.

The history of the variations in the text of these seventeenth and eighteenth verses is a remarkable one. In the greater number of the manuscripts the word "law" alone is used, without the addition of the word "prophets." It is impossible to take such a rendering as significant of "the written law." In other copies, in Tischendorf's and in the Canonical one, the word "prophets" is added, not with the conjunction "and," but with the conjunction "or"; the law *or* the prophets. This also expressly excludes the rendering, "the written law," and gives the sense of the eternal law.

In some copies, not accepted by the Church, the word "prophets" is added, preceded by the conjunction "and," instead of "or"; and on the repetition of the word law, "and the prophets" is added again. In this way the sense of the whole passage is changed, and Jesus is made to speak only of the written law.

These variations furnish us with the history of the interpretation of this passage. The one clear meaning is, that Jesus here, as also in Luke, speaks of the eternal law; but among the copyists of the Gospels there were some who desired to make the law of

¹ This is far from being the only argument for this interpretation. As if purposely not to leave in doubt which law is meant, Jesus immediately afterwards and in direct continuity dwells on a striking instance of the rejection of the law of Moses by that eternal law not one tittle of which shall pass away, the most violent contradiction of the former to be found in the Gospels (Luke xvi. 18): "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery":—that is to say, by the written law divorce is allowed, but by the eternal law it is a sin.

Moses binding, and so wilfully altered the meaning by the addition of the words "and the prophets."

Other Christians, who reject the books of Moses, either exclude the addition, or change the conjunction "and" into "or" (*καί* into *ἢ*), and the Canonical Scripture in this passage uses "or." Yet, notwithstanding the clearness of the text as thus accepted by the Canon, and its freedom from all doubt, Canonical interpreters continue to explain it in the spirit in which these unaccepted changes were made. This passage has been subjected to countless constructions, each further from the true meaning, as each successive interpreter has been guided less and less by the plain and simple meaning of the teaching of Jesus; and the greater number of these interpreters have adopted the apocryphal sense refuted by the text.

To be persuaded that in these verses Jesus speaks only of the eternal law, we need but examine the word which has given occasion to the false interpretation.

In Russian it is "zakon"; in Greek, "*νομός*"; in Hebrew, "tora"; in all three languages, this word "law" has two principal meanings: the one is the eternal law itself, without any relation to the form of its expression; the other is the written expression of what is accounted law. These two different meanings exist in all languages.

In Greek, in the Epistles of Paul, this difference is even determined sometimes by the use of the article. Minus the article, Paul generally employs the word in the sense of the written law; with the article, in the sense of the eternal law of God.

Among the ancient Hebrews, by the prophets, and by Isaiah, the word law ("tora") is always used in the sense of the revelation of the one eternal teaching of God apart from any formal expression. But in Ezra the same word began to be employed in

the sense of the five books written by Moses, and it was so used in the later stage, that of the Talmud. To the Mosaic books then was given the general title of "tora," the law, as with us the word Bible is used, with this difference, however, that we have words to distinguish what we mean by the Bible and by the law of God, whereas the Hebrews had only one and the same for both.

We now see why Jesus, like Isaiah and the other prophets, sometimes employs the word law ("tora") in the sense of the law of God, which is the true one, and sometimes rejects it in the sense of the written law of the five books. But, to mark the difference, when, rejecting it, he employs the word in the sense of the written law, he always adds "and the prophets," or else puts before the word "law" the word "your."

When he says, "Do not do to another what you would not have him do to you, for this is the law and the prophets," he speaks of the written law, he says that it may all be reduced to that one expression of the eternal law, and in these words he repeats the written law.

When he says (Luke xvi. 16), "The law and the prophets were until John," he speaks of the written law, and denies its obligations on man.

When he says (John vii. 19), "Did not Moses give you the law, and yet none of you doeth the law?" or (John viii. 17) "in your law it is written," or (John xv. 25) "that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their law," he speaks of the written law, of the law which he rejects, of that same law which condemned him to death (John xix. 7). The Jews answered Pilate, "We have a law, and by that law he ought to die." It is evident that the law of the Jews which condemned to death is not the law he taught. When Christ says, "I came not to destroy the law, but to teach you to fulfil it, for nothing can

change in it, and it must all be fulfilled," he speaks, not of the written law, but of the divine eternal law, and, so speaking, confirms it.

But let us suppose that all these are formal proofs, that I have elaborately put together the various texts, contexts, and variations, that I have concealed all that makes against my own interpretation; let us suppose that the interpretation of the Church is altogether clear and convincing, and that Jesus really did not abrogate the law of Moses, but left it in its former authority. Let us suppose it was so; but, then, what is it that Jesus did teach?

According to the interpretation of the Church, Jesus taught that he was the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God the Father, who came upon earth to redeem by his death the sin of Adam. But every one who reads the Gospel knows that Jesus is either silent on this point, or, at all events, that his meaning is doubtful. Suppose, however, that we are mistaken, and that these assertions are made. Even in that case the allusions of Jesus to his being the Second Person of the Trinity and the Redeemer of the sins of man, occupy the smallest and the most obscure part of the Gospel. Of what does all the remaining part of the teaching of Jesus consist? It cannot be denied, and all Christians have at all times admitted, that the teaching of Jesus mainly consists in rules for human conduct, in the relations between man and his fellow-men.

If we admit that Jesus taught a new way of life, we must define for ourselves the kind of men among whom he taught.

Let us take Russians or Englishmen, Chinese or Hindus, or even savages, and we shall see that every nation has its own rules of life, its own laws to live by, and that in consequence, if a teacher preaches to any one of them a new law of life, he must necessarily annul the old; for, if he did not, he would be

no teacher. It would be the same in England, in China, the same with Russia. The teacher would first necessarily have to annul our existing laws, which we esteem so highly and think almost sacred.

But with us it might happen, though I grant a difficulty in the supposition, that the teacher of this new law of life would annul only our civil and criminal laws, our customs, and would leave untouched the laws we hold to be divine. But in the midst of the Hebrew nation, who had only one law, a law considered divine, and which embraced the whole conduct of life down to its slightest details,—in the midst of such a people what could he teach, if he declared that the whole law of the nation was to remain and not pass away?

Let us suppose that this again is no proof. Let those who interpret the words of Jesus to mean that he confirms the whole law of Moses, consider this. Whom, through the whole course of his career, did Jesus convict? Against whom did he raise his voice, calling them Pharisees, lawyers, and scribes?

Who were they that rejected the teaching of Jesus, and crucified him through their high priests? If Jesus accepted the law of Moses, where were the faithful followers of that law, who must have been on his side? Was there really not one left?

The Pharisees, we are told, were a sect. The Jews do not say so; they say that the Pharisees were the faithful followers of the law. But allowing them to have been a sect, so also were the Sadducees. Where, then, were those who kept aloof from sects, where were the orthodox Jews?

According to the Gospel of John all enemies of Jesus are called Jews, and, as Jews, they reject his teaching and oppose him. But in the Gospels it is not the Pharisees and the Sadducees alone who appear as the enemies of Jesus; the lawyers, who observed the law, the elders, who were always

considered the representatives of national wisdom, were not less his enemies.

Jesus says, "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" (to a changed life, *μετάνοια*). Where, then, were the righteous to be found? Who were they? Was it Nicodemus alone? Even Nicodemus is represented as an honest but erring man.

We are so accustomed to this strange explanation, that the Pharisees and certain wicked Jews crucified Jesus, that it never enters into our heads to put the simple question, Where were those who were not Pharisees and wicked, but were simply Jews and upholders of the law? A moment's thought over this question, and all becomes clear. Jesus, whether regarded as God or man, taught on earth in the midst of a people who obeyed a law regulating the life of man and called the law of God. How did Jesus behave with respect to this law?

Every prophet, every teacher who unfolds to men the law of God, will always meet with something which men believe to be that "law." He will never be able to escape from the double sense of the word "law," the one their own law, which these men falsely consider to be the law of God, the other that which is really His eternal law. And not only will the teacher be unable to escape this twofold significance, but frequently he will have no wish to avoid it, and will purposely confound the two meanings, pointing out that in the law professed by those whom he seeks to convert, there are still some eternal truths, though it is false as a whole.

Every teacher takes as the foundation of his teaching the truths familiar to those whom he would convert.

And thus Jesus does with the Jews, by whom both the one and the other law were called by the same name—"torah." Jesus, in the law of Moses (and

even more so in the law of the prophets, especially of Isaiah, whose words he so frequently quotes), admits the existence of eternal and divine truths agreeing with the eternal law, and these, as expressing love to God and to our neighbour, he takes for the groundwork of his own teaching.

Jesus many times expresses the same idea. He says (Luke x. 26), "What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Eternal truth may doubtless be found in the law, if we read it aright. More than once he shows them that the commandment of their law, to love God and our neighbour, is a precept of the eternal law (Matt. xiii. 52). After many parables, in which he explains to his disciples the meaning of his teaching, he says at the end, as if referring to all that had gone before, "Every scribe [that is, every one who can read and write] who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure [together, without distinction] things new and old."

St. Ireneus, and all the Church after him, took these words in this very meaning, but, quite arbitrarily and in opposition to their sense, supposed them to include also the proposition that all that is old is sacred. Their meaning is clearly this, that whoever seeks what is good must take the old with the new, and reject nothing simply because it is old. Jesus by no means rejects what is eternal in the old law; but when the Jews speak to him of the law as a whole, or of its peculiar forms, he says that it is impossible to put new wine into old skins.

Jesus could not confirm the law as a whole, nor could he reject both it and the prophets—the law in which it is said "Love thy neighbour as thyself," and the prophets whose words he so often used to clothe his own ideas.

Hence it comes that instead of taking these simple words in the plain meaning confirmed throughout by the teaching of Jesus, we have before us a cloudy interpretation, introducing contradictions where there are none, and destroying the essence of the teaching by reducing it to mere words, and by re-establishing the Mosaic law in all its savage cruelty.

According to all the interpreters of the Church, especially from the fifth century downwards, Jesus did not reject the written law, but confirmed it.

But how did he confirm it? How can the law of Jesus be united to that of Moses?

To this there is no answer. The interpretations are a mere play upon words. They pretend that Jesus fulfilled the Mosaic law and the prophecies, and that he fulfilled the law through man's acceptance of him. The only real question for a believer, How to unite two contradictory laws which equally affect the life of man? remains without even an attempted decision; and the contradiction between the verse in which it is said that Jesus came not to destroy the law, and the verse in which it is said, "Ye have heard that it was said—but I say unto you,"—and again between the spirit of the whole teaching of Moses and that of Jesus, this contradiction remains in full force.

Let any one interested in this question, examine for himself the interpretations of this passage by the writers of the Church from the days of St. Chrysostom to our own, and the long dissertations will only convince him that not only is there to be found no explanation of the contradiction, but that others are artificially introduced which did not previously exist.

The impossible attempts to unite things which cannot be united show clearly that this union is not a mental error, but is due to a clear and definite

idea that it is necessary. And why it is deemed necessary, is no less clear.

Here is what St. Chrysostom, in his commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, says in answer to those who reject the law of Moses.

“On further scrutiny of the old law, which commands us to pluck out an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth, some at once exclaim, ‘How can he be good who says these things?’ What can we say to them? This, that on the contrary they are the most perfect proof of the love of God for man. He ordained this law, not in order that we should pluck out each other’s eyes, but that, fearing to undergo such evil from others, we should not ourselves inflict it. In the same way, when He threatened the inhabitants of Nineveh with ruin, He did not wish them to perish (for if He had wished it, He had only to be silent); He wished by these terrors to make them repent, that He might lay aside His wrath. Thus also, for those who are wicked enough to be ready to pluck out their neighbour’s eyes, He appointed the punishment with the object that, in case they will not refrain of their own good will from this cruelty, fear at least should prevent their depriving others of sight. If this was cruelty, then it was also cruelty to forbid murder, to prohibit adultery. But to speak thus men must be mad, in the last stage of insanity. I, for my part, am so much afraid to call these ordinances cruel, that I should consider any others opposed to them unlawful acts, if I am to judge with a man’s common sense. Thou sayest that God is cruel, because He commanded me to pluck out an eye for an eye; but I say if He had not given such commands, then might many more justly have called Him what thou hast named Him.” St. Chrysostom definitely accepts the law of a tooth for a tooth as divine, and the opposite of the law of

a tooth for a tooth, that is, the teaching of Jesus not to resist evil, as unlawful.

“Let us suppose that all law has been destroyed,” says St. Chrysostom elsewhere, “and that no one fears punishment, that all vicious men will be allowed to live, without any fear for the consequences, after their own inclinations—adulterers, murderers, thieves, and perjurers. Will not all then be brought low, towns, market-places, the earth, the sea? Will not the universe be filled with countless crimes and murders? This is evident to all. If, even while we have laws, terrors and threats, the designs of the wicked can hardly be restrained, what would hinder men deciding for evil, when these impediments were removed? What woes would not then burst over the life of man? Not only is there cruelty when the wicked are allowed to do what pleases them, but also when the man who has committed no injustice is left to suffer innocently without the slightest defence. Tell me, were any one to collect from all parts wicked men, arm them with swords, and order them to go throughout the town, killing all they met, could there be anything more inhuman? If, on the contrary, some one else should bind these armed men, and confine them by force in a prison, delivering out of their lawless hands those threatened with death, could there be anything more humane?”

(St. Chrysostom does not say how one is to determine who are the wicked. What if he himself were the wicked, and imprisoned the good?) “Now apply these examples to the law. The one, who bids us to pluck out an eye for an eye, imposes on the souls of the vicious the same terror as that produced by strong fetters, and is compared to the one who binds the armed men; but he who would appoint no punishment for the criminals, would arm them with fearlessness for consequences, and

would be like the man who gave out swords to the wicked and sent them through the town."

If St. Chrysostom acknowledged the law of Jesus, he ought to have made plain who it is that will pluck out eyes and teeth, and cast men into prison. If He who bids us do so, that is, God, were Himself to act, there would be no contradiction; but it is to be done by men to men, and the Son of God has bid men not to do it. God said, Do this; the Son said, Do it not. One of these two commandments we must accept, and St. Chrysostom, and with him the whole Church, accepts the command of God the Father, that is of Moses, and rejects the command of the Son, that is of Jesus, whose teaching he nevertheless professes to acknowledge.

Jesus put aside the Mosaic law, and gave his own instead.

There is no contradiction at all for a man who believes in Christ; disregarding the law of Moses, he accepts only the law of Jesus, and fulfils it. For the man who believes in the law of Moses there is also no contradiction. The Hebrews consider the teaching of Jesus to be vain words, and they believe in the law of Moses. The contradiction exists only for those who wish to live after the law of Moses, and yet assure themselves and others that they believe in the law of Jesus—for those whom Jesus calls hypocrites and a race of vipers.

Instead of accepting one or the other, the law of Moses or the law of Jesus, both are accepted as divinely inspired truths. But, when the hard facts of life come into question, then the law of Jesus is left and the law of Moses taken.

In this false interpretation, if we probe its meaning, lies the whole terrible drama of the strife of evil and darkness with goodness and light.

To the Hebrew people, embarrassed by countless material rules, imposed on them by the Levites as

divine law, and each one stamped with the words, "The Lord spake unto Moses,"—in their midst, appears Jesus. He found not only the relation of man to God, his sacrifices, his feasts and fasts, but the relations of man to his fellow-man, whether national, civil, and domestic, all the details of individual life—circumcision, the washing of the body and their vessels, dress—all, down to the smallest trifles, all accepted as the command, the law of God.

What was possible, I say, not to a God-Christ, but even to a mere prophet, to the most ordinary teacher, in dealing with such a people, but to destroy such a law? Jesus, like all prophets, takes from that which men believe to be the law of God only what is truly God's law, takes the groundwork, and, throwing aside all the rest, binds that groundwork into his own exposition of the eternal law. It is not necessary to destroy all, but it is most necessary to destroy the idea that the old law is of necessity vital in all its bearings. This Jesus does; for this he is reproached with destroying the law of God; and for this he is put to death.

But his teaching remains with his disciples; it passes into another state of society, into other ages. Under these altered conditions, as time goes on, this teaching is again overgrown with the same excrescences, the same interpretations and explanations; the mean inventions of man again replace the inspiration of the Divine. Where once was heard, "And the Lord spake unto Moses," now runs the formula, "It hath pleased us and the Holy Ghost";—the spirit is once more sacrificed to the letter. And, most astounding of all, the teaching of Jesus becomes involved with that "tora" (vain things), in the sense of the written law, which he could not but condemn. This "tora" is accepted as the inspired issue of Jesus' own mind, that is, of the Holy Ghost,

and he himself is caught in the web of his own weaving; his whole teaching is reduced to naught.

This is why, 1900 years after Jesus taught, I was placed in the strange position of having to search for the meaning of his teaching as for something new.

Yet in reality I made no discovery. I did no more than all do who are true seekers of God and His law. I perceived the existence of this eternal law in the midst of the confusion which men have called by its name.

CHAPTER VI

THE NEW COMMANDMENTS

AND thus, when I understood the law of Jesus to be the law of Jesus, and not that of Moses *and* Jesus; when I understood that it distinctly denies the law of Moses, the Gospels were to me no longer a heap of obscure and fragmentary contradictions; they formed in my mind a single indivisible whole, from which stood forth complete the grand principles of the teaching of Jesus expressed in five simple and clear commandments (Matt. v. 21-48) accessible to all men, but which to me had hitherto been a sealed book.

Through all the Gospels run the commandments of Jesus and our obligations to obey them.

All theologians *speak* of the commandments of Jesus, but what they *were* I had hitherto not known. To me it had seemed that they consisted in loving God and our neighbour as ourselves. I had not seen that this could not be called the commandment of Jesus, because it is the commandment of the old Mosaic law.

The words (Matt. v. 19), "Whosoever therefore

shall break one of *these* least *commandments*, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven," I had thought referred to the commandments of Moses. It had never entered my head that the verses (Matt. v. 21-48) clearly and definitely express the new commandments of Jesus. I did not see that, in the passage where he says, "Ye have heard that it was said—but I say unto you," his new commandments are distinctly declared, making in all, if we count by the number of references to the ancient law (taking the two references about adultery as one), five new, clear, and definite commandments.

Of the beatitudes and their exact number I had heard, and had been taught all about them in my lessons in divinity; but I had never heard of the commandments of Jesus. To my own great astonishment I found that I had to discover them for myself.

And this is how the discovery came about. In Matthew (v. 21-26) we read: "Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that every one who is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of the hell of fire. If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art with him in the way; lest haply the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou have paid the last farthing."

At the time when I first recognized the true bearing of the commandment not to resist evil, I began to think that to this passage also there must be a distinct significance applicable to everyday life.

The meaning I had formerly given to these words was, always to avoid anger, never to use abusive language, to live in peace with all men; but in the text I found a word which annulled that meaning. We are told that we are not to be angry without cause,¹ and that therefore the passage cannot prescribe unconditional peace. Troubled solely by these words, I turned for the resolution of my doubts to the interpretations of the theologians, and found, to my surprise, that the Fathers were chiefly occupied with deciding the cases in which anger was excusable and in which it was not. All the Church interpreters, relying principally on the words *without cause*, explain the passage thus, "We must not offend the innocent, nor use abusive language; but anger is not always unjust"; and then, to confirm their explanation, they quote examples of the anger of the apostles and the saints.

I was forced to acknowledge that anger for the glory of God, as they express it, is not forbidden, though contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel; and that this conclusion is justly founded on the words "*without cause*" in the twenty-second verse. These two words change the meaning of the whole passage.

Do not be angry *without cause*.

Jesus enjoins us to forgive all men, to forgive to the end, even as he himself forgave when he forbade

¹The Revised Version gives these words only in margin, but the Russian text, like our own Authorised Version, includes them.—*Trans.*

Peter to be angry with Malchus. When Peter opposed his master's arrest, it would surely seem that he acted not without cause. Yet Jesus, who thus forgives, says explicitly to man, do not be angry *without cause*; and by that saying permits men to be angry when they have just cause. Jesus preaches peace to all men, and then, as if defending himself against the supposition that this commandment is of universal application, shows that there are cases when anger is lawful, by adding the words "without cause"!

In the commentaries it is explained that there are times and seasons when anger is just. But who, said I, is to be the judge of these times and seasons? I have never yet seen angry people who did not think their anger just. All men believe their anger to be lawful and even needful. These words destroyed the whole meaning of the verse, but these words were in the Holy Scriptures, and I could not erase them. To me they seemed as if instead of the words "*Love thy neighbour,*" had stood "*Love thy good neighbour,*" or "*Love the neighbour who is agreeable to thee.*"

Thus the whole sense of this passage was destroyed for me by the words *Without Cause*. Those verses which enjoin us to be reconciled before prayer with those who have any cause of offence against us, which, unconnected with the words *without cause*, would have a positive meaning—received in this wise could now only have a conditional meaning.

Jesus, I thought, must surely have forbidden anger in every case, must have adjured all men to abstain from ill-will of all kinds. Before you offer your gift [that is, before you enter into relation with God], consider if there be not some one who is angry with you, with cause or *without*, and if such there be, first go and be reconciled to him, and afterwards offer your gift [or pray]. So I had

understood this passage; but from the commentaries it seemed that henceforth I must take it in a conditional sense only.

All the interpretations agree that we must strive to be at peace with all men, but if, through the depravity of those who are at enmity with us, we cannot be at peace, we must be reconciled with them in our hearts and thoughts, and then their ill-will cannot hinder our own prayers. Moreover, the words, "Whoever shall say Raca and fool, shall be in danger," had always seemed to me strange and obscure. If it is generally forbidden to use abusive language, for what purpose are examples selected so weak as hardly to come within the category of abuse at all? And then, why such a fearful threat against the use of a word so comparatively harmless as Raca, that is, an insignificant fellow? This was not clear.

I felt that here also was the same misunderstanding as had before obscured the words "judge not." I felt, as with the interpretation of the latter, so here, that what was simple, important, definite, and capable of practical application, had been made cloudy and indistinct. I felt that Jesus could not have intended the words, "Go and be reconciled," to have the popular significance, "be reconciled in your thoughts." What is the meaning of being reconciled in our thoughts? I believed that Jesus had repeated the saying of the prophet, that he desired not sacrifice, but mercy,—*i.e.* love to our fellow-men,—and that in consequence he taught that if we would truly please God, we must, before morning and evening prayer, at mass or vespers, consider if any man had anything against us, and if so, go and do what would appease him, before we offered our prayers to God.

But what about this phrase, *in our thoughts*? I felt that this interpretation, so destructive of all

clear and positive meaning, was founded upon the words, *without cause*. Strike them out, and the sense would be clear. But against this conception were all the commentators, and the Canonical Gospels, which adopt the words *without cause*. If I give way in this instance, I may give way in another at my own discretion; others may do the same. The whole difficulty hung on two words; were it not for them, all would be clear.

I make an attempt to examine the philological value of these words, to explain them so that they shall not destroy the sense of the passage. I take a lexicon, and find that the Greek word for the expression "*without cause*," *εικη*, means also *aimlessly*, *unadvisedly*; I endeavour to find a less destructive meaning, but without success. Turning from the lexicon to the context, I find that the word is only used in the Gospel twice, in this very passage. In the Epistles it is used several times. In the First Epistle to the Corinthians (xv. 2) it is used exactly in this sense. Consequently there was no possibility of explaining the word otherwise; it was necessary to acknowledge that Jesus said, *Do not be angry without cause*.

I must confess that to admit that Jesus in this passage could use language so obscure as to have no positive significance, was to me equivalent to rejecting the whole Gospel. One last hope remained—was this clause to be found in all the copies? I consulted the variations; I searched through Griesbach's edition of the Gospels where he gives all the instances in which this expression is used, and how, in what copies, and by what Fathers, this explanation or that is employed. I was delighted to find that there were many references to the expression "*without cause*," and many variations of it. The majority of the copies of the Gospels and of the Fathers omitted it entirely, being clearly, there-

fore, of the same mind as myself. I looked into one of the oldest copies of Tischendorf's transcript and the words "*without cause*" were not there. I took up Luther's translation—which, indeed, might have shown me the shortest road at first—and again the phrase "*without cause*" was wanting.

This expression then, so destructive of the true teaching of Jesus, was but an interpolation of the fifth century, not to be found in the most authentic copies of the Gospel.

Some one had added these words, and others had approved and explained his addition!

Jesus could not have used this terrible expression; and the simple plain meaning of the whole passage, as it had struck me at first, and as it must strike every one, is the true one.

Moreover, as soon as I understood that the words of Jesus forbade anger at all times and against all men, the prohibition of the words *Raca* and *fool*, which had formerly troubled me, received a larger interpretation than that of merely prohibiting abusive language.

The strange untranslated Hebrew word *Raca* gave me the clue I wanted. *Raca* means *one trodden down, annihilated, of no account*; the word *Rak* is much in use, and has the sense of exclusion, meaning *only not*. "*Raca*," therefore, would signify a man unworthy to be called a man. The plural form, *rekim*, is used in the book of Judges (ix. 4), where it means "*lost persons*." This, then, is the word which Jesus forbids to be used to any fellow-creature; and he forbids the use of that other word "*fool*" [that is, *madman*], by which we may hope to relieve ourselves from our general responsibility towards our fellow-men.

We are angry, we inflict injury upon others, and then in justification allege that the person with whom we are wroth is but a lost man, or a fool, a

madman. But Jesus has forbidden these two words to be used of men or to men; he forbids anger in all circumstances, nor will he allow any man to justify his wrath, because he deems another lost or mad.

Thus, instead of an obscure, indefinite, and unimportant expression, capable of being explained in many and arbitrary ways, I now found in the verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew, from the twenty-first to the twenty-sixth inclusive, the first clear and definite commandment of Jesus, "Live in peace with all men; account no anger to be just; regard no man as either lost or mad; do not justify your own anger, yet think the anger of others against yourself unjustified; rather, if there be any one who is wroth against you, even without cause, go and try to put away his unfriendly feeling before you go to pray. For the future strive to put an end to all enmity between yourself and others, lest it increase and destroy you."

The second commandment also now appeared to me to stand out with equal clearness. In the fifth chapter of Matthew, from the twenty-seventh to the thirtieth verse inclusive, it is said, in reference to the old law, "Ye have heard that it was said, 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' (Ex. xx. 14-28): but *I say* unto you, that every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell. And if thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not thy whole body go into hell."

In the thirty-first verse it is said that, if any one put away his wife, he shall give her a writing of divorcement (Deut. xxiv. 1), and in verse thirty-two

follows: "But *I say* unto you, That every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and who-soever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery."

These words I understand thus,—a man has no right to admit even the thought of being united to any other woman than the one whom he has already chosen, and he can never change that woman for another—though the law of Moses had allowed this.

As in the first commandment against anger we are enjoined to put an end to it in its beginning (a commandment enforced by the parable of the man who is delivered to the judge), so here Jesus says that adultery arises from men and women looking on each other as objects of carnal pleasure. To prevent this, we must banish all that excites the desires of the flesh, and, uniting ourselves to one wife, never repudiate her under any pretext whatever, since the repudiation of wives leads to divorce, and forsaken women seduce other men and are the causes of depravity in the world.

The wisdom of this commandment is at once clear. It would abolish all the evils which threaten society through relations between the sexes. Men, knowing that the loose indulgence of passions must lead them to dissension, will keep clear of all incentives to passion, and obeying the law of nature to live in couples, will keep that natural union inviolate. Thus there will be neither man nor woman living single, deprived of married life, and thus the evils which spring from such solitude will cease to exist.

But the words, "saving for the cause of fornication," signifying that a man might divorce his wife if she had committed adultery, had always astonished me in reading the Sermon on the Mount, and now astonished me still more.

Besides the fact that in the very form in which

this thought is expressed there seemed something not altogether worthy of the occasion: side by side with the deepest truths of the discourse something like a formal note to a legal code,—there was this strange exception to the general rule, which in itself contradicted the whole line of thought.

I consulted all the commentators, and all (St. Chrysostom and others), even learned theologians and critics like Reuss, admitted that these words convey Christ's approval of divorce in the case of the wife's adultery, and also that in the nineteenth chapter of the same Gospel, a like approbation is conveyed. I read and re-read the thirty-second verse, and at each perusal it seemed to me more impossible to admit this interpretation. To make sure I compared all similar passages, and found in the Gospel of Matthew, of Mark, of Luke, and in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, the explanation that marriage was indissoluble without exception.

In Luke (xvi. 18) it is said: "Every one that putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and he that marrieth one that is put away from a husband committeth adultery."

In Mark (x. 5-12) there is the same clearness of expression: "For your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment, But from the beginning of the creation male and female made he them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh: so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder. And in the house the disciples asked him again of this matter. And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her: And if she herself shall put away her husband, and marry another, she committeth adultery."

So also in Matthew (xix. 4-9).

In the First Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (vii. 1-12), we find developed in detail the idea of the prevention of immorality by the union of husband and wife. That union is to be for life; each is to render to the other what is due, and it is also expressly said that in no circumstances shall the husband leave his wife for another, or the wife her husband.

According to Mark, Luke, and Paul divorce is never lawful. In the saying, that man and wife are one flesh, and that their union is of God, a saying repeated in two of the Gospels, divorce is forbidden. By the sense of the whole teaching of Jesus, enjoining forgiveness of all injuries, and making no exception in the case of a fallen wife, divorce is clearly unlawful; neither can divorce harmonize with the sense of the whole passage, which explains that the putting away of a wife leads to immorality, and especially to the immorality of her who is put away.

On what, then, is based the interpretation that divorce on the grounds of the wife's adultery is lawful? On those very words in the thirty-second verse of the fifth chapter of Matthew, which had struck me as so strange, "saving for the cause of fornication." These words are explained by all to mean, that Jesus permits divorce in case of the adultery of the wife; they are repeated in the nineteenth chapter of Matthew, according to many copies of the Gospels, and by many of the Fathers, instead of the words, "for the sake of fornication."

I renewed my study of these words, and it was long before I could understand them. I saw that here must be some error both in the translation and the explanation, but what that error was I was slow to discover. Yet it was clearly error. Jesus is setting his own commandment in direct opposition to that of Moses, by which every husband in whose

eyes his wife finds no favour, may give her a bill of divorcement, and send her out of his house, and yet he says, "I say unto you, that every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress." By such words the law of Moses is not contradicted, nor is there any positive decision as to the lawfulness of divorce. All that is said is, that putting away a wife leads to her becoming an adulteress, and forthwith an exception is made in the case of a wife already guilty of adultery!

This exception, relating to a wife guilty of adultery, when the subject immediately in hand is rather the husband, is in itself strange and unexpected, but in this particular place it becomes absurd, because it destroys even the doubtful sense which the passage originally had.

It has been first said that the putting away of a wife drives her to adultery, and then husbands are permitted to put away adulterous wives, as if a woman once guilty of adultery would therefore sin no more!

But more remained: on studying the passage more closely, I saw that it was not even grammatically correct. It is said, "Every one that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress," and the sentence is complete. The words refer to the husband who, divorcing his wife, exposes her to the temptation of committing adultery. Why then is added, "saving for the cause of fornication"? If it is said that any husband who divorced his wife, saving when she had been faithless, was guilty of adultery, the proposition would be grammatically correct. But here the subject, "the husband who divorces," has only "causes" for an attribute. One cannot add to this the words, "saving for the cause of fornication." To which sentence, then, does this phrase belong?

It is evident that divorce will expose her to the sin with equal certainty whether she has been guilty of adultery previously or not.

Take the following sentence: "He who refuses sustenance to his child, besides being guilty himself, causes him to become cruel." This clearly means, not that the father may refuse to sustain his child if the latter be cruel, but, that the father who refuses, besides being cruel himself, leads his son into a similar sin. In the same way the Gospel expression would have sense, if for the words "cause of fornication" were to be substituted "for sensuality," "for incontinence," or something similar, expressing not an act but a quality.

I asked myself, Is it here simply said that whoever divorces his wife, besides being guilty of incontinence himself (for nearly all who divorce their wives do so with intent to take another) exposes her to sin? If in the original text the word translated by "fornication" had the significance of incontinence (and might therefore be applied not to the wife but to the husband) the sense would be clear.

And again, as often before, a perusal of the original confirmed my supposition beyond the possibility of a doubt. The first thing which struck me in my investigation was that the word *πορνεία*, translated "fornication," is very different in meaning from *μοιχᾶσθαι*, the word generally used in that sense. To see if the words are synonymous, I consulted the lexicon, and found that the word *πορνεία*, which answers to the Hebrew "zono," the Latin "fornicatio," the German "hurerei," the French "libertinage," the English "incontinence," has a definite meaning, and has not in any lexicon the sense of an "act of adultery," "adultère," "ehebruch," as Luther and the Germans translate it. It signifies a state of moral depravity, a quality, not an act, and can never be translated by "adultery."

I discovered also that the word "adultery" is always rendered throughout the Gospels as in this passage by the word *μοιχεύω*. I had only to correct this clearly intentional error, for the sense given by commentators to this passage and the context in the nineteenth chapter to become absolutely inadmissible, and for the sense in which the word *πορνεία* refers entirely to the husband to become evident.

The translation in full is, *παρεκτός*, "besides," *λόγον*, "the crime," *πορνείας*, "of incontinence," *ποιεῖ*, "it obliges," *αὐτήν*, "her," *μοιχᾶσθαι*, "to be an adulteress," which means, word for word, that "He who divorces his wife besides his crime of incontinence obliges her to become an adulteress." The same sense is obtained in the nineteenth chapter. It is only necessary to correct the erroneous translation of *πορνεία* by putting "incontinence" for adultery, and it is clear that the words "*εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ*" cannot apply to the woman. And as the words "*παρεκτός λόγον πορνείας*" can mean nothing but "the crime of incontinence on the part of the husband," so the words "*εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ*" in the nineteenth chapter cannot refer to anything but the debauchery of the husband. The words "*εἰ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ*" mean word for word "if this is not through incontinence," or "for the sake of incontinence." Thus it becomes clear that in these words Jesus answers the thought of the Pharisees, who were of opinion that if a man abandoned his wife, not for dissolute living, but simply that he might marry another, he did not thereby commit adultery. Jesus says that the abandonment of a wife—that is—the cessation of relations with her, even if not done for the sake of sheer debauchery, but with a view to another marriage, is the sin of adultery. Thus when we search the simple meaning, we find it in accordance alike with the spirit of the whole teaching, with the words to which it refers, and with the laws of grammar and logic. So it was

this simple meaning, inherent in the words themselves and consistent with the spirit of the whole teaching, which I had been obliged to seek out for myself, and had discovered only with the greatest difficulty. Truly if we read these words in the German or French¹ version, where it is distinctly stated, "pour cause d'infidélité," or "à moins que cela ne soit pour cause d'infidélité," how are we to guess that the real meaning is something quite different? The word *παρέκτός* in the lexicons means, *excepté, ausgenommen, besides*, but it is translated by a whole proposition, *à moins que cela ne soit*. The word *πορνείας* is translated *infidélité, ehebruch, adultery, and on this intentional corruption of the text is founded an interpretation which destroys the moral, the religious, the grammatical, and the logical meaning of the words of Jesus.*

Thus I saw the truth—to me at once so awful and yet so welcome,—that Christ's teaching is both simple and clear, that his precepts are definite and of the highest practical importance, but that modern interpretation, based on the wish to justify existing evils, have so obscured his words that their real meaning is hard indeed to discover.

I felt indeed that if half the original text of the Gospels had been burnt or erased, it would yet be easier to reach their meaning than it is to penetrate through so many unconscientious commentaries, designed to pervert and conceal the true meaning. In this case it was even clearer to me than in my former difficulty, that some private motive,—to justify, for example, the divorce of an Ivan the Terrible,—might have brought the Gospel doctrine of marriage into hopeless obscurity.

We have only to reject all comments and explanations, and then instead of vague and indefinite phrases, the clear and precise second commandment

¹The same difficulty occurs in the English version.—Ed.

of Jesus stands revealed before us—thus—“Do not give way to the desires of the flesh ; but let every man in possession of his natural powers, take to himself a wife ; let every woman take a husband ; let a man have only one wife, and a woman only one husband ; and let them under no pretext whatever dissolve the personal relations consequent on marriage.”

Following close upon this second commandment comes another reference to the old law, and then the third commandment is declared (Matt. v. 33-37) : “Again ye have heard that it was said to them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shall perform unto the Lord thine oaths (Lev. xix. 12 ; Deut. xxiii. 21) : but I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God ; nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet ; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.”

This passage had always puzzled me in my former studies. It did not trouble me by its obscurity, like that relating to divorce, nor by its contradiction of other passages, like the prohibition of anger without a cause, nor by any difficulty in fulfilling it, like the passage about turning the other cheek to the smiter. It troubled me, on the contrary, by its clearness, by its simplicity and easiness. Side by side with precepts whose depth and meaning awed and touched my heart, I came suddenly upon a rule seemingly petty, easy to keep, and unimportant in its bearings on myself and others. I had never sworn by Jerusalem, nor by God, and it cost me nothing to abstain from doing so ; nor could I understand what importance to others my fulfilment or negligence of this commandment could have.

Anxious for an explanation of this puzzling simplicity, I had recourse once more to the commentators. This time they helped me.

All the commentators see in these words a confirmation of the third commandment of Moses, not to swear by the name of God. They explain that Jesus, like Moses, forbids the taking of God's name in vain. But, in addition to this, they also hold that this rule of Jesus, not to swear, is not always binding on us, and in no way applies to the oaths which a citizen is called upon to take to the constituted authorities. Thus do commentators search the text of Holy Scripture, not to confirm the plain meaning of what Jesus ordained, but to prove how men may and ought to leave it unfulfilled.

It is said, that Jesus himself confirmed the use of oaths before the judgment-seat, when to the words of the high priest, "I adjure thee by the Living God," he answered, "Thou hast said"; also that the Apostle Paul calls God to witness to the truth of his words, this being clearly an oath; that oaths were prescribed by the law of Moses, and never revoked by Christ; that the only oaths forbidden are vain ones, hypocritical ones, like those of the Pharisees.

When I saw the meaning and drift of these explanations, I understood that the commandment was by no means so insignificant, easy, and immaterial as I had supposed it to be while I did not reckon the oaths which a citizen is called upon to take by the State as among those forbidden.

And I asked myself: "Does it *not* mean, then, that the oaths actually forbidden are the very oaths so carefully guarded by the writers of the Church, the oaths without which the division of men into kingdoms and states would be impossible, without which there could be no military class?" Soldiers are men who practise violence, and they call them-

selves "sworn."¹ If I asked my grenadier at the Borovitsky Gate how he reconciled the difference between the Gospels and the military regulations, he would reply that he had taken an oath; that is to say, he had sworn on the Testament. It is the answer I have invariably received from military men. An oath is such a necessary part of the organization of that terrible evil which issues in violence and war, that in France, where Christianity is denied, oaths are still enforced.

"Surely, if Jesus had not said, 'Swear not at all,' he should have said it. He came to destroy evil on earth, and had he not forbidden all swearing he would have spared the most terrible of evils. It may be said that in his time this evil was not so marked, but that is not true. Epictetus and Seneca both spoke against the practice of administering oaths to any one; they are forbidden also in the laws of Manu. On what ground shall I say that Jesus did not perceive this evil? How can I say so, when he has pointed it out directly and with such clearness?

"Jesus said, 'But I say unto you, Swear not at all.' This expression is as simple, clear, and unhesitating as the words, 'Judge not,' and 'Condemn not,' and requires as little explanation; particularly as it is further explained that whatever is required of us more than the answer Yea, or Nay, is from the source of evil.

"If it be the teaching of Jesus that one should always fulfil the will of God, how can a man swear to fulfil the will of a fellow-man? The will of God may not accord with the will of a man. Moreover, in this very place Jesus himself says so (ver. 36), 'Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for not only thy head but every hair on it is in the hands of God.' The same is said by the Apostle James, as

¹ An old Russian alternative for soldier is "sworn."—Ed.

if by way of climax, in the last chapter of his Epistle (ver. 12): 'But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.' The apostle distinctly states why we must not swear: an oath in itself may seem not criminal, but through it we fall under judgment, and, therefore, he bids us swear not at all. Can anything be more clear than the words both of Jesus and his apostle?"

So puzzled, however, had I been, that for a long time I was in doubt as to the true meaning. I asked myself, How is it, then, that we all take oaths on the Gospel? It seemed impossible that these words should have been so misinterpreted.

But I had read the commentaries, and had seen that the impossible had been accomplished. What happened in the interpretation of the precepts not to judge, not to be angry with any one, not to destroy the union between husband and wife, had taken place here also. We establish our own social arrangements, we get attached to them, and wish to consider them sacred. Jesus, whom we profess to believe to be God, comes among us and tells us that our social order is bad. We acknowledge him to be God, but we will not give up our social order at his bidding. What then are we to do? Where we can, we interpolate the words "Without cause." When we can, we, like partial judges, in the same way abolish the rule against anger, wrest the letter of the law away from the intention of the law-giver, and instead of the commandment never to divorce a wife, we read that divorce is lawful. Where it is impossible to alter the strict sense of the words, as in "judge not," and "condemn not," and in "swear not at all," we boldly act in direct contradiction to the whole teaching, while affirming that we follow it. In very truth the chief obstacle to under-

standing the law against the swearing of oaths, has been that so-called Christian teachers have boldly forced men to take oaths on the Gospel itself; in other words, have forced them to do by the Gospel what is contrary to the Gospel.

Is a man who is obliged to swear on the cross and the Gospel, likely to pause and to think that the cross is sacred only because on it was crucified the One who forbade him to swear, and that while taking the oath he perhaps kisses as a holy thing the very¹ place where it is clearly and distinctly written, *Swear not at all?*

This boldness, however, did not surprise me. In Matthew v. 33-37, I saw how distinct was the commandment, and how easy of fulfilment, "Swear not at all to any man at any time, for every oath is extorted from men for evil purposes."

Again, a reference to the old law, and a fourth commandment is declared (Matt. v. 38-42; Luke vi. 29, 30): "Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, Resist not evil: but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

I have already spoken of the clear and definite meaning of these words, and of how little right we have to explain them away, and to pervert them. The interpretations of this passage, from the time of Chrysostom to our own, have indeed been astonishing. These words are pleasing to all men, and every one is led to thoughts of deep moment

¹ In Russia the Testament is opened for the administration of oaths.—ED.

in considering them, with this one exception, *that we do not allow them the meaning which they really have.*

Theological writers, in no way hindered by the authority of him whom they confess as God, calmly put a limit to the meaning of his words.

They say, "It is of course understood that all the commandments about bearing with offences, and refraining from vengeance, being specially directed against the Jewish love of revenge, exclude neither the necessity of public measures for the suppression of evil nor the punishment of those offenders who do evil, nor the private efforts of the individual to uphold the integrity of justice; to bring offenders to their senses, and to thwart the wrong-doing of evil-minded men. Were this not so," they say, "the spiritual laws of Jesus would, after the manner of the Jews, be turned into a mere dead letter to be used for the furtherance of evil and the crushing of virtue. The love of a Christian should be as the love of God; but as the latter restrains and *punishes evil* only when it is derogatory to His glory or imperils the salvation of men; so in all other cases it behoves us energetically to restrain and punish evil, and the obligation to do so falls naturally on the State authorities." (The Commentary on the Gospel by the Archimandrite Michael, from which the above is a citation, is altogether based on the interpretations of the Fathers.)

Learned Christians and free-thinkers do not tie themselves to the words of Jesus, but correct him. They admit his utterances to be very lofty sentiments, but devoid of all possibility of a practical application to life, since they would destroy the whole of that social order which they feel we have so well arranged. This is the theory of Renan, Strauss, and of all the free-thinking commentators.

But we have only to treat the words of Jesus as

we treat the words of any one whom we meet and converse with, we have only to admit that he says what he means, and we are freed from all the necessity for subtle interpretations.

Jesus says, "I consider your way of regulating your lives foolish and bad, and in its stead I offer you another." He then goes on to speak the words contained in the fifth chapter of Matthew, from the thirty-eighth to the forty-second verse. It would seem necessary that, before correcting these words, we should understand them. But this is exactly what nobody wishes to do; because we have decided beforehand that the social order under which we live, and which would be destroyed by them, is the sacred law of humanity.

I myself never thought our way of living either good or sacred, and for that reason, perhaps, came to the right understanding of this commandment sooner than others. And when I had understood it, its truth, clearness and force, made a deep impression on me. Jesus says, "You wish to destroy evil by evil, but that is unreasonable. That there may be no evil, do none yourselves." He then enumerates the cases in which we are accustomed to do evil, and forbids us in such cases so to act.

This fourth commandment of Jesus was the first which I understood rightly, and it gave me a key to the meanings of all the others. The fourth commandment, so simple, clear, and easy of fulfilment, says, "Never resist evil by force; do not oppose violence to violence; if beaten endure with patience; if despoiled bear with the spoiler; if forced to labour, labour; if from you be taken that which you account you own, let it freely go."

Next, after the customary reference to the old law, follows the fifth commandment (Matt. v. 43-48), "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love

thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy (Lev. xix. 17, 18): But I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you; that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust. For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the Gentiles the same? Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

These verses had previously seemed to me an explanation, a strengthening, nay, even an exaggeration of the previous commandment, "Resist not evil." But when I found that every passage which begins with a reference to the old law has its own simple substantive meaning, and one capable of being applied in practice, I felt that it must be the same in this case. Hitherto, after each reference, a commandment had been declared, and each verse has a meaning and cannot be struck out. Here again, then, it must be the same. The last words, repeated by Luke, that God makes no distinction of persons and does good to all, and that we therefore should be like God, and not act like the Gentiles who make such distinctions, but should love all men, and do good to all alike—these words were clear, they were for me a confirmation and explanation of some distinct rule; but it was long before I could understand what that rule was.

Love your enemies! That was a thing impossible, one of those magnificent expressions which we can only look upon as manifestations of an unattainable moral ideal. It was either too much, or nothing at all. We may choose not to injure an enemy, but love him we cannot. Jesus could not prescribe an impossible thing. Moreover, is there not some-

thing doubtful in the first words in reference to the old law, "*hate thine enemy*"? In the previous passages Jesus quotes the law of Moses with verbal exactness, but here he quotes words which were never spoken. He, as it were, calumniates the law.

The commentaries did not help me at all. In all the interpretations it is admitted that the words, "*hate thine enemy*," are not in the law of Moses, but the explanation of this incorrect rendering is nowhere given. The difficulty of loving evil men, your enemies, is allowed, and the words of Jesus are generally corrected to mean that, though we cannot love our enemies, we may refrain from wishing them or doing them any ill. Meanwhile we are taught that we may, indeed, that we ought to, denounce evil-doers, that is to say, resist our enemies. We are told of different steps towards the attainment of this virtuous end, and the final result of the Church's interpretation is that Jesus, for some unknown reason, quoted the law of Moses incorrectly, and then used language which, magnificent as it is, is in reality useless, and incapable of being practically applied.

It seemed to me that this could not be true. Surely, here also should be some clear and definite sense, as in the first four commandments. In order to discover this sense, I first of all strove to get hold of the meaning of the incorrect reference to the law: "Ye have heard that it was said . . . hate thine enemy."

It is not without purpose that Jesus as he declared each of his rules quoted the very words of the law,— "do not kill, do not commit adultery," and so on; and then opposed his own teaching. Unless we understand his own interpretation of the law quoted by him, we cannot understand what it is that he enjoins on us. In the commentaries it is expressly

stated (and indeed it is impossible to avoid the statement), that in this instance he quotes words which are not in the law, but it is not explained why he does so, and what this incorrect reference signifies.

It appeared to me that the first thing needful was to understand the intention of Jesus in departing from the text, and I asked myself what it might be. In all his previous references to the law, a single precept is alone quoted—do not kill, do not commit adultery, keep your oath, a tooth for a tooth—and then there is opposed to each the answering precept of his own teaching.

Here two contrary precepts are quoted; “you have been told—love your neighbour and hate your enemy.” So, clearly, the new law must be based upon this difference between the two precepts of the old law with respect to a neighbour and an enemy.

In order to understand more clearly in what this difference consisted, I asked myself what the words “neighbour” and “enemy” signified in the Gospel language. After looking into the lexicons and searching the Bible for parallel passages, I was convinced that “neighbour” in the Jewish tongue simply meant a Jew. Neighbour is used in this sense in the parable of the Samaritan. A teacher of the Jewish law could not understand a Samaritan to be his neighbour. The word is used in the same sense again in the Acts (vii. 27). In the language of the Gospels it signifies “a fellow-countryman,” a man belonging to the same nationality. So that, supposing the opposition which Jesus brings out in this passage by quoting from the old law, “Ye have heard that it was said, Love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy,” to be that between a countryman and a foreigner, I asked myself what “an enemy” meant to the mind of a Jew,—and found the confirmation of my supposition. The word “enemy” is

seldom used in the Gospels in a private or personal sense, but almost always in a public and national one (Luke i. 71-74; Matt. xxii. 44; Mark xii. 36; Luke xx. 43; and in other places). The singular number, in which the word "enemy" is employed in these verses, in the expression "hate thine enemy," shows me that a national enemy is here spoken of. In the Old Testament the singular number is always used in this meaning.

As soon as I understood this, my difficulty vanished.

For what purpose could Jesus, so accurate in his quotations from the law, in this one instance have employed words not to be found in it? Simply take the word enemy in a national sense, and the word neighbour in that of a fellow-countryman, and the whole difficulty disappears. Jesus speaks of the way in which the law of Moses prescribes that the Hebrews should treat a national enemy. All the passages, spread over the different books of the Scriptures, in which it is prescribed to the Jews to oppress, slay, and destroy other nations, are brought together by Jesus into one saying, "*Thou shalt hate or do evil to thine enemy.*" He says, "You have been told to love your own people, and to hate the enemy of your race, but I tell you to love all without distinction of nationality."

And no sooner had these words become clear to me than another great difficulty was solved—how I was to understand the words, Love your enemies. It is impossible to love our personal enemies, but men of a hostile nationality we *can* love as well as those of our own. Consequently, it now became evident to me that, in saying, "You have been told, love your neighbour and hate your enemy, but I say unto you, love your enemies," Jesus alludes to the fact, that all men have been accustomed to consider those of their own nation as their neighbours, and those of

other nationalities as their enemies; and it was also clear to me that he calls on men not to do this. He really says, "By the law of Moses a distinction is made between Jews and those who, not being Jews, are therefore the national enemy, but I say unto you, you must not make this distinction." It agrees with this precept that he should next, according both to Matthew and Luke, declare that to God all men are equal, that on all the same sun shines and the same rain falls. God makes no difference between nations, but sends good to them all alike. And thus should men behave, treating all their fellows alike, and not dividing them like the Gentiles, into different and hostile nationalities.

I thus again found confirmation of the simple, important, clear, and practical meaning of the words of Jesus. Again instead of the language of an obscure and indefinite philosophy, there stood before me a clear, definite, important, and practical rule—to make no difference between our own and other nations, never to act in conformity with such a difference, that is, never to provoke nor take part in war, and to treat all men of what nationality soever as though they belonged to our own.

All this was now so simple and clear, that I was astonished I had not perceived it at the first glance.

The cause of my misunderstanding was again that which had made the denial of law courts and oaths so strange to me. It was not easy to see that the courts, the sittings of which are opened with Christian prayers, which are blessed by those who call themselves the guardians of the law of Jesus, are at variance with the principles of Christ's teaching, are even repugnant to it.

It was yet more difficult to see that the oath which the special guardians of the law of Jesus induce all men to take is expressly forbidden by that law; and it is hardest of all to see that the sentiments

universally regarded as not only necessary and natural, but even admirable and nobly courageous, our love for our native land, our defence, our exaltation of her, our struggle against her enemies, and so forth, are not only offences against the law of Jesus, but constitute a manifest rejection of him—to see all this, I say, was difficult indeed.

The life of mankind has now drifted so far away from the teaching of Jesus that the very breadth of the gulf has become the chief hindrance to our right understanding of it. We have so long shut our ears to his words, so long forgotten the rules of conduct which he has given us,—about our not being permitted to be angry with, much less kill, another fellow-creature, about the wrongfulness of defending ourselves, and the duty of turning the other cheek, about loving our enemies,—that accustomed as we are to call those organized for murder “Christian soldiers,” accustomed to hear prayers addressed to Jesus for victory over our enemies, we, basing our glory and our pride on murder, having made a sacred thing of that symbol of murder, the sword, until we regard the man who has been deprived of it as a shamed and degraded man,—we now actually believe, that Jesus did not prohibit war, and that had he intended to do so he would have spoken more clearly.

We forget that Jesus could not conceive that any men who could accept his teaching of humility, love, and brotherhood, could be capable of organizing the murder of their brethren with a quiet conscience. He could not conceive that, and consequently could no more have forbidden a Christian to take part in war, than a father, instructing his son how to live honestly, to offend no one, and even to sacrifice himself to others, would think of forbidding him to cut throats on the highway.

That it would ever be necessary to forbid a Christ-

ian to commit murder under the name of war never occurred to the apostles, nor to any disciple of Jesus in the early ages of Christianity. Listen to what Origen says, in his answer to Celsus (lib. viii. c. 73):—

“Then Celsus afterwards urges us to help the Prince with all our strength, to relieve him in his just quarrels, to fight with him, to bear arms under him, and, if he call upon us, to assist him in the conduct of his armies.

“Now it may be said as to this, that we do, as occasion requires, assist our princes, taking up (if I may so say), divine assistance and the whole armour of God. And these things we do, obeying the voice of the apostle when he says, ‘I exhort you therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks should be made for all men, for kings, and for all that are in authority.’ And by how much any is the more godly, by so much the more efficient is he in helping princes than are those soldiers who go forth to their armies and slay whomsoever they can of their enemies. Besides which, we may say to those who are strangers to the faith, and who require us to fight for the common good, and to slay men: that even those among yourselves who are priests of certain images, and have charge over the temples of those whom ye esteem gods, keep their right hand undefiled, and may on no account enlist in the army.” And he ends the chapter, “Yea, we rather fight manfully for the Prince whilst we do not engage as soldiers under him though he urge us to do so; but we fight for him, training our own camp in righteousness, through continual communion with God.”

This was the way in which the Christians of the earlier ages bore themselves towards war, thus their teachers, addressing themselves to the powerful of the earth, spoke of it; and that at a time when

martyrs perished by hundreds and by thousands for professing the faith of Jesus.

But now? Now there is not even a question as to whether a Christian may or may not take part in war. All the young men who are educated in the so-called Christian law of the Church, when they have reached a certain age, are every autumn taken before the military authorities, and, with the help of the pastors of the Church, there renounce the law of Jesus. It is not very long ago that a peasant refused, on gospel grounds, to serve in the army. The teachers of the Church expounded to him his error, but, as he believed not them but Jesus, he was thrown into prison, and kept there until he had changed his belief. And this happens, eighteen hundred years after God has laid His clear commandment on all Christians: "Count not the men of other nations your enemies, but count all men your brethren, and treat all as you treat those of your own nation; therefore not only do not slay those whom you call your enemies, but love them, and do good to them."

Having arrived at this understanding, then, of the commandments of Jesus, which are as simple and definite as they are unshaken by any commentaries, I turned to consider what might have happened, had the Christian world obeyed them not with mere lip-service, but by making them the rule of life for the happiness of man? How would it be, if men believed in the obligation laid on them by these commandments at least as firmly as they believe in daily prayer, in going to church on Sunday, in fasting on Friday, at Lent, and at other appointed seasons? How would it be, if men believed in these commandments as they do in the observances of the Church?

And thereupon I fell to imagining a truly Christian society, living after these commandments, and

teaching the younger generation to abide by them. I pictured to myself how from childhood we should then be taught, both by word and by example, not as we are taught now, that a man must preserve his dignity, must stand up for his rights against others (which can never be done without humiliating and offending them), but that no man has any rights of any kind, nor can be higher or lower than another, save only that he who would fain stand highest is lowest and basest of all. I imagined how we should learn that no position in life degrades a man so much as his own anger, that the seeming insignificance or the madness of a man cannot justify my anger against him nor my separating myself from him.

Instead of the whole structure of our present life, from the plate-glass windows in the shops, to the theatres, the novels, and women's dresses, all provocative of evil passions, I imagined a society taught by word and deed the baseness of finding amusement in immoral books, in theatres, and at balls; taught that every act, having for its end the mere display and adornment of the body, is a mean and disgusting one.

Instead of the custom, considered necessary and even right, that a young man should live loosely before marriage; instead of considering as natural a way of life which separates married couples; instead of legalizing the position of the class of women who live by immorality; instead of permitting and blessing divorce; instead of all these things, I conceived our being taught, and practically convinced, that for a man who has attained the age of virility, and has not renounced sexual relations, it is monstrous and shameful to remain unmarried and alone, and that for a man to leave his wife for another woman is not only an act as unnatural as incest, but is also cruel and inhuman.

Instead of that law which ordains that all our joys

should be purchased and preserved for us by violence ; instead of each of us being, from childhood to extreme old age, either the oppressed or an oppressor, I imagined how all that we heard and saw around us should teach us the baseness and brutality of revenge, the shamefulfulness of violence, and assure us that the only true joys in life are those which need no force to guard. Again, I seemed to hear that the highest honours are not the due of those who despoil and tyrannize over others, but of those who yield to others and minister to them.

Instead of it being thought lawful and excellent for a man to bind by oath his most valuable possession—his life—to the will of another whom he knows not, I imagined ourselves taught to look upon the reasoning will of man as a sacred thing, which none ought to renounce, and on an oath sworn to any one on any account as a renunciation of our existence as reasoning beings, and therefore an outrage against a holy thing.

I pictured to myself how, instead of those international hatreds, which, under the pretence of "patriotism," are instilled into us, instead of those glorifications of murderous wars, which from our childhood are presented to us as furnishing examples of the most valiant deeds, we might be taught horror and contempt for all the public, diplomatic, and military proceedings which entail separation among men ; how we might be taught to look upon the recognition of any particular kingdom or state, of particular laws, on the drawing of frontiers, or the assignment of lands, as a proof of savage ignorance ; on war, that is, on the slaying of men personally unknown to us, as the most frightful wickedness to which an erring and brutalized man can possibly descend. Imagining a society in which such belief flourished, I put to myself the question—how would life then be ?

Formerly, when I had understood the teaching of Jesus otherwise, to the question, What change would take place in the world were we to follow his teaching, I had had to answer, None. We shall all pray, all profit by the blessings of the Holy Communion, all believe in the salvation of the world by Jesus Christ, and yet that salvation will still depend not on us, but on the coming of the end of all things. Jesus will come at the appointed time in his glory to judge both the quick and the dead, and to establish the kingdom of God, independently of our life.

But the teaching of Jesus, as I now saw it, had still another meaning; to wit, that the establishment of the kingdom of God upon earth rested with ourselves. The fulfilment of Jesus' teaching, as expressed in the five commandments, was the establishment of God's kingdom, the kingdom of peace on earth to all men. Peace to all men is the highest good which can be obtained on earth. This is how the kingdom of God appeared to all the Hebrew prophets; this is how it has appeared, and still does appear to every sensitive human heart. All prophecy promises peace and goodwill to man.

The essence of the whole teaching of Jesus is, that the kingdom of God signifies peace to man. In the Sermon on the Mount, in the conversation with Nicodemus, in the charge to his own disciples, in all his discourses, Jesus speaks only against the things which set man against man, which hinder him from peace and the kingdom of heaven. The parables are all really a description of the kingdom of God, with this injunction, that only those who love their brethren, and are at peace with them, can enter into that kingdom. John the Baptist, the predecessor of Jesus, says that the kingdom of God draws near, and that Jesus Christ will give it to the world.

Jesus says, that he has brought peace unto the world (John xiv. 27). "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful."

We see now that these five commandments of Jesus really can give peace to man. All five have the same singleness of aim. Men have only to believe in the teaching of Jesus and to fulfil it, and there shall be peace on earth, not a peace made by men, temporary, accidental, partial, but a peace which shall be universal, inviolable, and eternal.

The first commandment says, "Be at peace with all men; consider no man as insignificant, or foolish (Matt. v. 22). If peace be broken, strive to re-establish it with all your strength. The service of God is the destruction of enmity. Be reconciled for the least difference, that you may not lose the true life." In this commandment all is said; but Jesus, foreseeing how strongly the temptations of the world would make against peace, includes them also in his second commandment. "In spite of physical beauty, resist carnal desires; be a husband to one wife only, a wife to one husband, and quit each other under no pretext." Then comes the temptation to take oaths. "Know that this is an evil, and swear not at all." The fourth temptation is revenge, miscalled human justice. "Seek no vengeance, nor justify yourself in that you have been offended, but bear with injuries and render not evil for evil." The fifth temptation is the difference between nationalities, the enmity between races and kingdoms. "Know, that all men are brothers and sons of the one God; break peace with no man under the plea of national aims. If one of these commandments be left unfulfilled by men, peace will be broken. If all be fulfilled, then peace shall be in all the world. The fulfilment of

these commandments excludes evil from the life of man."

Yes, under such conditions the life of man would indeed be what every human heart seeks and desires. All men would be brothers, all would be at peace one with another, enjoying for the appointed term of mortal life all the good this world can give. The sword would be changed for the ploughshare, and the spear for the sickle. Then the kingdom of God would be set up on earth, that kingdom of peace promised by all the prophets, which was drawing near in the days of John the Baptist, and which Jesus proclaimed in the words of Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; he hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke iv. 18, 19; Isa. lxi. 1, 2).

The simple clear commandments of peace given by Jesus, anticipating and preventing all the chances of strife, reveal to us the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus then is truly the Messiah, he fulfilled what was promised in his name. It is we who have left unfulfilled what is the desire of all men's hearts, though it is that for which we have ever prayed and continue to pray.

CHAPTER VII

THE VEIL OF FALSE DOCTRINE

Why, then, do men leave undone what Jesus bids them do, and what alone can secure to them the highest good attainable by man, for which he has always longed and still desires? From all sides I

hear but one and the same answer, though it may be expressed in different words: "The teaching of Jesus is excellent, and were it fulfilled the kingdom of heaven would indeed exist on earth, but it is too difficult to be realized in practice."

Christ's rules for human conduct are divinely good, and would be a blessing to men,—but they are hard for men to practise! We so often hear and repeat this that the contradiction involved escapes us.

It is agreeable to human nature to do what is good, and every system of human ethics should be occupied only with what is best for mankind. When men are shown what is best for them to do, how can they say that they wish to do it but cannot? Men wish to do what is of advantage to them, and avoid doing the contrary.

The reasoning activity of man, from the time of his creation, has been exercised in the effort to find, amid the contradictions with which his individual and social life abounds, that which is best for his well-being.

Men began by fighting for land, for every object of their desire, and ended by dividing everything between themselves and calling each share "property." They find that such a state of affairs, though more difficult to maintain, is nevertheless an improvement, so they hold to it. As soon, then, as men have decided what is best for them, they do it, no matter how hard of accomplishment it may be. What, then, is our meaning when we say that the teaching of Jesus is excellent; that life so regulated would be better than the life we live; but that this better life is not for us, because it is too difficult?

If we are to take the word "difficult" to mean that the sacrifice of our immediate desires to a greater good is difficult, why not say that it is

difficult to plough the ground to obtain bread, to plant apple trees that we may have apples? That difficulties must be endured for the sake of a greater good is known to every human being endowed with the smallest particle of intelligence; yet while we call Christ's teaching excellent we add that it is too difficult to be practically applied to life. Difficult it is, but the difficulty lies in this, that by obeying it we lose much that we now possess. It is as though we had never heard how much better it may sometimes be to suffer and to lose than never to face any hardship and always to satisfy our desires.

Man may be a mere animal and no one can reproach him for this; but no one can reasonably say that he wishes to be only an animal. For as soon as a man reasons he is conscious he is a reasoning being, and as such he cannot but admit the distinction between reasonable and unreasonable. Reason enforces nothing; it throws light upon everything.

I try in the darkness to find a door and only bruise my hands and knees. A light is brought, and at once I see the door, and need no longer bruise myself against the wall. Can I then affirm that, seeing the door, it is still so difficult to pass through that I must needs prefer to hurt myself?

In this astonishing conclusion—that the teaching of Jesus is good and salutary, but that men are weak and bad, and that while they may yearn for the better, they tend ever to the worse, and therefore cannot attain the better—there is a palpable misunderstanding.

This astonishing conclusion is not a mere error of reasoning. There is evidently something besides,—the working of some erroneous idea. Only some false conception, some mistaking of the unreal for the real and the real for the unreal, can reduce men to this strange denial of the possibility of doing that

which would give them happiness, as they themselves acknowledge.

The false idea which has led to this state of mind is the dogmatic so-called "Christian Creed" which has been instilled from childhood—through various Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and Catholic catechisms—into all who profess the Christianity of the Churches.

This creed, according to the definition of its believers, consists in acknowledging as real certain things that have been imagined. (This was said by Paul, and is repeated in all theological works and catechisms as the best definition of faith.) This acknowledgment of the unreal as real has reduced men to the strange affirmation that Christ's teaching is excellent for all men, but that it is of no practical use to them!

The teaching of this creed may be thus briefly summarized. God, existent from Eternity as One in Three persons, chose to create a world of spirits. God is good, and created these spirits for their good, but it somehow happened that one of these spirits spontaneously became wicked, and therefore miserable. Long periods passed by, and then God created another world,—a material world this time,—and placed in it man, whom God had created for man's welfare. God created man, happy, immortal, and without sin. His happiness consisted in the enjoyment of life without labour: his immortality was the eternity of his present existence, and his freedom from sin consisted in ignorance of evil.

But in his paradise man was tempted by that spirit of the first creation who had spontaneously become wicked. That was "the fall of man"; and since that time men have been born as fallen as the first man, and since that time, too, they have worked and suffered and sickened and died, having struggled physically and morally: *i.e.* the imaginary man

became the real man such as we know him to be, and as we have no right nor reason to suppose he was ever otherwise. Therefore the condition of man who chooses good and rejects evil,—who toils and suffers and dies,—the only real condition—other than which we cannot conceive—is, according to this creed, not the true condition of man, but an accidental, temporary, and unnatural condition.

Though, according to this teaching, this condition of man has continued for all men since Adam's exile from Paradise—that is, from the beginning of the world till the birth of Christ—and has continued in the same way since, believers are nevertheless bound to believe that it is only a temporary and an unnatural state. According to this teaching, the Son of God—himself God, the Second Person of the Trinity—was sent by God upon the earth in the form of a man, that he might deliver mankind from this abnormal, accidental, and temporary condition, to lift from them the curse which this same God had laid upon them for Adam's sin, and to restore them to their former natural condition of felicity—consisting of immortality, idleness, and freedom from suffering.

Further, this teaching presents the Second Person of the Trinity as suffering death at the hands of men to atone thus for Adam's sin, and to put an end to the presumed unnatural condition of mankind which had lasted from the beginning of the world. It goes on to declare that since this death, those who have believed in Christ have returned to the state of man in Paradise, have been immortal, idle, and free from sin and sickness. But it does not dwell much on that result of redemption, according to which, after the sacrifice of Christ, the Earth, for believers, should have begun to yield fruit without requiring labour, while for them sickness should have ceased and mothers should have borne children without pain:—because it is difficult to persuade the faithful,

for whom pain is still bitter and toil burdensome, that pain is pleasant and toil easy.

But that part of the teaching which affirms that sin and death have ceased to exist, is proclaimed with energetic emphasis. It is confidently asserted that the dead live, and as the dead cannot bear witness whether they live or no, just as a stone cannot affirm whether or not it can speak, this absence of denial passes as proof of the assertion that those who have died are not dead. With even greater solemnity and assurance it is asserted that since the coming of Christ man is delivered from sin by faith in Christ,—that is to say, since the coming of the Son of God, man need no longer enlighten his life by reason, and need no longer strive to attain the best. He has only to believe that Christ redeemed him from sin, and then he is made sinless, that is, perfect. According to this doctrine, men must regard their reason as impotent, and that therefore they are sinless, that is that they cannot err. The true believer must be convinced that since the time of Christ the earth yields fruit without labour, children are born without pain, and that sickness, death, and sin are no more—that there are no more errors. In brief, they must imagine that *what is not, is—and what is, is not.*

Thus speaks the rigorously logical theory of theology.

By itself the doctrine may seem harmless. But deviation from truth is never harmless, and always entails consequences whose significance is in proportion to the significance of the subject to which the untruth refers. In this instance the subject of the untruth is the whole life of man.

According to the doctrine taught, what is called true life is a personal, blissful, sinless, and immortal life—that is to say, a life which nobody has ever seen, and which does not exist. The life which all

mankind has always lived and continues to live, is—according to this teaching—an evil and fallen life, a degeneration from that happy life which is due to us.

The struggle between the animal nature and that striving towards reasonable life which lies in the soul of every man, and constitutes the very essence of humanity, is completely put aside by this teaching. The struggle is transferred to the events which took place with Adam in Paradise at the beginning of the world. The question whether I personally shall eat or not eat of the fruit which tempts me, no longer exists. Adam decided it in a negative sense, once for all, in Paradise. Adam sinned, that is, Adam erred, *for us all*, and I and all men are irretrievably fallen, and all efforts to live according to reason are useless and even impious. I am hopelessly evil, and I must know it. My salvation is not to be found by guiding my life by the gift of reason, and, having recognized good and evil, by making choice of the good. No, Adam once for all has committed evil for me, and Christ once for all has redeemed Adam's sin, and therefore I, as a mere spectator, have but to lament over the fall of Adam and to rejoice over the redemption by Christ.

All the love of truth and goodness which live in the heart of man, all his efforts to enlighten his reason by investigation of the various phenomena of life, in short, all man's spiritual life, are, according to this teaching, not only of no importance, they are a temptation and an impertinence.

Life as it is upon earth, with all its joys and beauty, with all its struggle of reason against darkness—that life which has been lived by all the men who have lived before me, my own life with all its inner strife and all its triumphs of reason, is thus not the true life, but a fallen and irreparably degraded life. The true and sinless life is only in faith—that is, in imagination,—in madness.

Let a man but set aside his life-long habit of accepting all this; let him look simply and straight at this doctrine; let him put himself into the position of a fresh mind, educated in ignorance of this doctrine, and he will at once see what such a doctrine would seem to such a man. Why! it would seem absolute insanity!

It seemed to me strange and terrible to be brought to think thus, but I had to recognize that thus it was, for this alone gave me the clue to that astounding, unreasonable, and contradictory objection which I had heard raised everywhere against the practicability of Christ's teaching—*It is excellent and would give happiness to men, but men are not able to follow it.* Nothing but the conception of the non-existent as real, and of the real as non-existent, could have reduced mankind to this astonishing inconsistency. And I found this false conception in the so-called Christian Creed as it has been preached during 1500 years.

But this objection to the teaching of Jesus, that while it is good it is yet incapable of application, is made not only by believers but also by unbelievers, by those who disbelieve or think they disbelieve the dogmas of Original Sin and Redemption. It is made by men of science, by philosophers, and by men of high culture generally, who believing, or professing to believe, in nothing, consider themselves above all such superstitions. I saw that it was so from the beginning. I saw also, or thought I saw, that these learned men had yet another reason for denying the possibility of Christ's teaching. On looking deeper into the grounds of their denial, I convinced myself that they, too, have a false idea of life, and that this idea is founded on the same misconception as the false idea of those who believe. They disbelieve in God, in Christ, and in Adam; but in the original false proposition, on which the

whole idea is based, in the right of man to a life of ideal happiness, they believe as much, and even more firmly than do the theologians.

Science, in her alliance with philosophy, boasts herself to be the arbitress and mistress of man's intellectual development; yet she is not truly the mistress but the slave. Her view of the universe comes to her fraught with religion, and she can but work in the path shown to her by religion. Religion unfolds the meaning of the life of man, and Science applies that meaning to the varied facts of life. If, then, Religion give a false idea of life, Science, educated in that religious view of the scheme of the universe, will on all sides apply that false idea to human life. And this is what has happened to our Christian science of philosophy.

The teaching of the Church gave as the leading principle of human life, this—that man has a right to a life of bliss, and that this bliss is attainable, not by his own efforts, but through some external cause. This view of the universe became the base of all our science and of all our philosophy.

Religion, Science, Public Opinion, all are agreed that the life we lead is bad, but all are equally against the doctrine which teaches that it rests with our own selves to make that life better.

The teaching of Jesus, that the improvement of man's life depends on his own efforts to follow the guidance of his reason, cannot be realized, because Adam fell, and the world is given over to evil, says Religion.

Christ's teaching cannot be fulfilled, because man's life is governed by certain fixed laws independent of human will and effort, says Philosophy.

Philosophy and Science repeat in other terms exactly the same conclusions as are presented by Religion in the dogmas of Original Sin and Redemption.

Two fundamental propositions lie at the basis of

the doctrine of Redemption. First, that man has a right to a life of happiness, but that our present life on earth is an evil which can never be improved by human effort. Second, that we can only be saved from this evil life by faith.

These two theses have become the basis of the present life conception of both believers and unbelievers in our falsely named Christian Society. The Church and its institutions arose from the second thesis. The first created our common opinions and all our social and philosophical theories.

All the political and philosophical theories which justify the existing order of things—Hegelianism and all its brood—are founded on this thesis.

Pessimism, which, demanding vainly from life what it cannot give, thereupon denies life, is also derived from the same source.

Materialism, with its singular enthusiastic affirmation that man is a natural process and nothing more, is the legitimate offspring of the doctrine that our present earthly life is a fallen life.

Spiritism, with its learned advocates, is the best proof that scientific and philosophical views are not free, but are based on the idea, inculcated by religious teaching, that an eternal life of bliss is the inherent possession of man.

This misunderstanding of the meaning of life has perverted the entire mental activity of mankind. The dogmas of the Fall and of the Redemption have concealed the most important and legitimate sphere of human activity, excluding from the field of human science all inquiry as to what man himself ought to do in order to become better and happier. Science and philosophy, though they imagine themselves hostile to pseudo-Christianity, and are proud of the fact, are nevertheless sustaining it. Science and philosophy treat of anything and everything except the one chief question "How is man himself to

become better and to live more happily?" The teaching of morality—now called ethics—has disappeared from our pseudo-Christian Society.

Neither believers nor unbelievers ever ask themselves how we ought to live, and how employ the reason given to us; but they ask, "Why is not our life what we imagined it to be, and when will it become what we wish?" Only this false teaching, penetrating the blood and marrow of generations, could have given rise to the phenomenon that man seems actually to have rejected the apple of the knowledge of good and evil (which according to tradition he ate in Paradise), and, forgetting that his entire history is concerned only with the conflict between his rational and his animal nature, has employed his reason only to discover the historical laws which account for the latter.

The religious and philosophical teaching of all nations (with the exception of those of the pseudo-Christian world), all the systems with which we are acquainted, of the Jews, of Confucius, of Buddha, of Brahma, of the Grecian sages, are all concerned with the regulation of man's life, and with rules for his conduct. The system of Confucius deals exclusively with the perfecting of the individual, the system of the Jews with the personal observance by the individual of God's covenants, the system of Buddha with the security of the individual against the ills of life. Socrates taught perfection in the name of reason; the Stoics held that the perfect liberty of reason was the sole basis for a true life.

The entire intellectual activity of man was centred in one thing—the working out by reason of the idea of good. Freedom of the will, say our philosophers, is an illusion; and they are proud of the boldness of this assertion. But free-will is not a mere illusion; it is a word which has no meaning. It was invented by theologians and writers on criminal jurisprudence;

and to refute that word is but to fight against wind-mills.

Reason, which enlightens life, and guides our conduct, is no illusion; it cannot be explained away. "Follow reason to attain welfare," has always been the doctrine of all true teachers of mankind; it is the whole teaching of Jesus; and to deny reason by the help of reason is absurd.

Christ's teaching deals with "the son of man," taken in the sense of mankind; it deals, that is, with the aspirations towards good common to all men, and with that Reason, no less common to all men, which helps them to the realization of their wishes. (To prove this meaning of the expression "son of man" is superfluous. If we take it in any other sense, we must hold that Jesus purposely used words which did not carry the sense he intended to convey. But even if, as the Church would have it, "The Son of man" means the Son of God, it means also a man in the flesh, for Jesus calls all men the sons of God.)

That a son of man is truly a son of God stands out clearly through all the Gospels, but nowhere so clearly as in the conversation with Nicodemus. Every man, says Jesus, besides being conscious of a life born of the flesh of his father and mother, cannot but acknowledge another and a higher birth (John iii. 5, 6, 7). That which a man feels in himself to be free, is that which is born in him of the Eternal One whom we call God (ver. 8). This, that is born in us of God, this son of God in man, must be exalted within us that we may obtain the true life (ver. 14). The son of man is the son of God, with the like nature as God. He who exalts and prizes above everything else this son of God within himself, he who believes that life is found in this divine element alone, he alone will not be at variance with life, for the contradiction springs from a disbelief in the light which is in us (vers. 18-21), the light of which it is

said in the Gospel of John, that life is in it, the life which is the light of men.

Jesus teaches us to exalt above all the Son of man, who is at once the Son of God and the guiding light of our lives. He says, When you lift up or honour the Son of man, you will know that I speak nothing from myself (John xii. 49). The Jews, not understanding these words, asked, Who is the Son of man who is to be lifted up (xii. 34)? Jesus answered (ver. 35), "Yet a little while is the light in you.¹ Walk while ye have the light, that darkness overtake you not; and he that walketh in the darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." To the question, "What does this lifting up of the Son of man mean?" Jesus answers, "To live in the light which is within man."

The Son of man, according to Jesus, means the light in which men are to walk, while they have light within them. Thus, in Luke (xi. 35), "Look therefore whether the light that is in thee be not darkness," and in Matthew (vi. 23), "If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!"

Before and after Jesus lived on earth all men have taught that there is within man a divine light, the light of reason, that it alone should be followed, because in it alone can good be found. This was the teaching of the Brahmins, of the Jewish prophets, of Confucius, Socrates, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus, of all true sages, who, instead of building up philosophical theories, sought the truth for their own welfare and that of all men.²

¹ In all the translations of the Church there is an intentional error in this passage; instead of the words "in you" (*ἐν ὑμῖν*), everywhere the rendering is "with you."—(*Author's note.*) (Except in the Revised Version, where, though the text says "among you," the margin gives the alternative, "in you."—*Editor's note.*)

² Marcus Aurelius says, "Honour that which is more powerful than anything on earth, which rules and which guides all

Yet by our dogmas, we say that this light is of no importance to man. What *is* important, say believers, is the understanding of the substantive nature of the persons of the Trinity, what sacraments are vital, and what are not; for the salvation of man depends, not on his own efforts, but on belief in the Trinity and the due observance of the sacred mysteries of religion. What is important, say unbelievers, is the understanding of the law which sets the particles of matter in endless motion through infinite space and time; but the action of man's reason on his welfare is of no importance, because the improvement of his state belongs not to him but to general laws which we will discover.

I am convinced that in no very remote future, the history of the so-called scientific development of recent centuries will serve as an inexhaustible subject for the laughter and pity of our descendants. "During several ages the learned men of the small western world were in a state of epidemic insanity, believing that a life of eternal bliss was theirs by right, and devoting themselves on every side to discover whence, and by what law, that life should begin for them, while totally neglecting all endeavours on their own account to make their existing life better."

Yet still more curious to the future historian will it appear, that his misguided ancestors nevertheless had a teacher, who had showed them clearly and men. Honour also that which is most powerful within thyself. The latter is like to the former, because it profits by what is within thee to guide thy life."

Epicetetus says, "God sent his seed not only to my father and grandfather, but unto all those that live upon earth, especially unto those who reason, for they alone enter into relation with God through reason, and by it are made one with him."

In the book of Confucius it is written, "The law of the great science consists in developing and establishing the light of reason, which we have received from heaven." This proposition is repeated several times, and forms the foundation of the teaching of Confucius.

definitely what they must do to attain happiness; but that some of them explained his words to mean that he would come in the clouds and set all things in order, while others declared his teaching excellent but impracticable, because human life not being what they desire it to be was therefore unworthy of serious study; the reason of man, said they, should be directed to the study of the laws of this life, and should not concern itself with the welfare of humanity.

The Church says the teaching of Jesus cannot be fulfilled, for our life here is but a shadow of the real life; it cannot be good, for it is all evil. The best way to endure such a life, it adds, is to despise it, and to live through faith (that is, in the imagination) in a blissful and eternal life hereafter, and that while we are still on earth we must be content to live as we can, and to pray.

Philosophy, Science, Public Opinion, all are agreed that the teaching of Jesus cannot be practically applied, because man's life does not depend on the light of reason (by which only it might be improved), but on "general laws." It is useless, therefore, to consider life by the light of reason, to strive to live in agreement with it. We must, say they, rather live as we can, in the firm belief that by the law of historical progress, of sociology, and by other laws, the life we have lived badly for a very long time will suddenly become good by itself.

There is a farm to which many men come, and in that farm is all that men can want—a house well furnished; granaries filled with corn; cellars and storerooms well stocked with all kinds of stores; in the outbuildings are agricultural instruments, tools, harness, horses, cows, sheep,—all that is needed for a life of plenty for all. Men from all parts of the earth flock to this farm, and make use of all that they find therein, each man for himself, without

thought of his neighbour, or of those who may come after him. Each thinks only of himself; each makes haste to profit by all he sees around him. Then begins a general waste of all, a general quarrel and strife for the possession of each particular object. Milch cows and unshorn sheep are killed for their flesh; fires are kindled with benches and carts; men fight for milk and for grain, spilling and spoiling far more than they use. No one can eat a morsel in quiet. Each man snarls at his neighbour, and the weaker is ever forced to yield to the stronger; till at last all the inhabitants of that farm take their departure, exhausted, bruised, and hungry.

Then the owner sets all in order once more. Once more the farm is filled to overflowing, but once more there is the same crush and quarrel. All is given and taken in vain, and once more a crowd of jaded, bruised, and exasperated men come forth venting their spite on their comrades, and abusing the master of the house for having prepared so little and so ill.

Again the kind master reorganizes the farm, only for the same scene to recur. At last arrives a teacher who says to the others, "Brothers, we do not act well! Look, how many goods there are in the farm, how well it is all arranged! There is enough for us all, and for all that will come after us, if we will but live reasonably. Let us not take from each other, but rather help each other. Let us plough and sow and look after the cattle, and it will be well with all of us." Then it happens that some understand the words of the teacher, and begin to act as he has said. They cease from fights, and from robbing each other, and begin to work. But the rest, who either will not listen to the teacher, or listening will not believe, continue as formerly to quarrel among themselves and to ruin the

goods of the master, and then go on their way. Others follow with the same result. Those who have listened to the words of the teacher, keep beseeching their brethren not to quarrel nor to lay waste the master's goods, assuring them that it will be better for them to hearken to the teacher's advice. But still there are many who will not listen, who will not believe, and things go on for very long in the old way. And so long as men do not believe his teaching this is quite natural and comprehensible.

But at last, it is said, there came a time when all on the farm heard the words of the teacher, when all understood them, and not only understood, but confessed that it was God Himself who spoke in the person of the teacher, who was Himself God; and all believed, as in a holy thing, in each word that fell from the teacher's lips. But it is also said that, later on, instead of living in harmony with the words of the teacher, all returned to their old life, and began once more to quarrel among themselves, and to say, "Now we know for a certainty that thus it must be and not otherwise."

What can this mean? Even cattle, when they have food to eat, do not snatch it from one another; and yet men, having knowledge of a better life, ordained, as they believe, by God Himself, elect the worst, because, they say, it is not possible to live otherwise. Such men must have some strange delusion. Well, what could those men on the farm have had in their minds, that, having once believed the teacher, they should yet continue to live their old life, to despoil each other, to fight, to ruin both the master's goods and themselves?

This is what they had in their minds. The teacher said to them: "Your life in this house is bad; live better, and it will be well for you." But they imagined that the teacher condemned their

life in this farm altogether, and promised them another and a happy life, not there, but elsewhere. So they decided that this farm was but an inn, and that it was not worth troubling themselves about their life there, so long as they were careful not to lose sight of the good life promised in another place. Only in this way can the strange conduct of men who believe that the teacher was God, or account him wise and his words true, and yet continue to live as before in direct contradiction with his teaching, be explained.

Men have heard and understood all; but they have let the lesson of the teacher pass through their ears—that men should work out their happiness themselves here upon earth, in the farm where they have met, instead of imagining that this farmhouse is only an inn, and that elsewhere will be found the real and lasting dwelling-place. This is how the astonishing conclusion has been reached, that the words of the teacher are excellent, are in very truth the words of God, but to fulfil them here is impossible.

If men would only cease ruining themselves! would cease expecting some one coming to help them, either Jesus amid the clouds to the sound of trumpets, or some historical law, or the law of the differentiation and integration of forces! For there can be no help so long as men will not help themselves, and hardly any effort is needed. They have but to cease to expect a miracle from heaven or earth, and to cease to ruin themselves.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PATH OF LIFE

LET us suppose that the teaching of Jesus gives happiness to the world; let us suppose that it is reasonable, and that man has no reasonable ground to reject it. But what can a single individual do, amid a whole world disobeying the law of Christ? If all men suddenly agreed to live after the law of Christ, to obey would be possible; but how is one man to set himself against the whole world? "If I alone on earth fulfil Christ's law," people say, "I shall have to give up all that I possess, to present my cheek to the smiter without defending myself; if I do not consent to take oaths and to fight in war, I shall be arrested, and if I do not die of hunger, shall be beaten to death or thrown into prison, or shot. So that by my obedience to this law I should destroy my happiness and ruin my whole life."

This objection is founded on the same misunderstanding as that which rejects the application of the teaching of Jesus to life.

It is the argument generally used, and it is what I myself thought until I had entirely freed myself from the influence of the teaching of the Church, through which I had failed to understand in its true meaning Christ's doctrine of human conduct.

Jesus proposed his law of conduct to save men from a ruinous life, and you say you would be glad to follow his law, but fear it would ruin your life. Jesus teaches us a way of safety from a ruinous life, and you cling to the life which ruins you. Surely, then, you must consider your life by no means ruined, but a real and acceptable possession. In this acceptance of your earthly personal life as something real belonging to you, lies the cause of

the misunderstanding of the teaching of Jesus. He knew man's tendency to this error, and in a series of discourses and parables shows them that they have no *right* to life, that there can be no life until they obtain the true life and renounce the shadow which they call by that name.

In order to understand this doctrine of the salvation of life, it is necessary first to understand what was said about the personal life of man by the prophets, by Solomon, by Buddha, by all the wise men of the world. We may, as Pascal expressed it, put it from our minds—we may hold a screen before our eyes to hide from our view the abyss of death to which we are all hastening; but it is enough merely to think what this life is, this personal and separate life of man, to be convinced that it has no meaning at all for the individual, that it is a malicious irony, mocking man's heart and reason and all that is good within him.

Therefore, in order to understand the teaching of Jesus, we must stop and think, so that there may take place in us that *μετάνοια* (repentance) which John, the predecessor of Jesus, preached to men led astray like ourselves. John said, "Before all things, repent," that is, "Stop and think, or you will all perish." "The axe is laid to the root of the tree to hew it down," he said; "death and perdition stand beside every one. Forget not this, take heed!" Jesus himself at the outset of his career as preacher said also, "Take heed, or you all will perish."

In Luke (xiii. 2-5), Jesus is told of the Galileans whom Pilate had slain. "And he answered and said unto them, Think ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they have suffered these things? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all in like manner perish. Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam

fell, and killed them, think ye that they were offenders above all the men that dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

Had Jesus lived in our day and country, he would have said, Think ye that they who were burnt in the circus,¹ or those who have perished in railway accidents, were guiltier than others? Ye shall all likewise perish, if you do not take heed, if you do not find in your life that which cannot perish. Death through a falling tower, through a burning circus, terrifies you, but I tell you that a death as terrible and as inevitable awaits you also. In vain do you strive to forget it; and when it comes unexpectedly, it is the more terrible.

Jesus says, "When ye see a cloud rising in the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it cometh to pass. And when ye see a south wind blowing, ye say, There will be a scorching heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye know how to interpret the face of the earth and the heaven; but how is it that ye know not how to interpret this time? And why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" (Luke xii. 54-57).

You know the signs of the weather beforehand, how is it that you see not what is right for you? Flee from danger, guard well your lives, and still, if you fall not by Pilate's hand, a tower will crush you; and if neither Pilate nor tower injure you, you may die in your beds in still acuter sufferings.

Take the trouble to make a simple calculation, as men of the world do when they undertake any enterprise, whether to build a house, to set out for a war, or to set up works; they plan and take great

¹ This alludes to one of the wooden buildings erected for the public amusements during the Carnival and Easter Week in Russia in 1883, which caught fire, and as the doors could not be opened from the inside nearly all within perished.—Ed.

pains that the enterprise may have a reasonable success. "For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doth not first sit down and count the cost, whether he have wherewith to complete it? Lest haply, when he hath laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all that behold begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, as he goeth to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and take counsel whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand?" (Luke xiv. 28-31).

Is it not, then, a senseless thing to take pains with what, for all your labour, will never be finished? Death will always come before the house of your earthly happiness is completed. And if you know beforehand that however you may struggle against death, the victory will be to him and not to you, is it not better to cease to struggle with him, to set all your affections not on that which must of a certainty perish, but to seek that which death cannot affect?

In Luke we read, "And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. For the life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. Consider the ravens, that they sow not, neither reap; which have no store-chamber nor barn; and God feedeth them: of how much more value are ye than the birds! And which of you by being anxious can add a cubit to his age? If, then, ye are not able to do even that which is least, why are ye anxious concerning the rest? Consider the lilies, how they grow: they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, Even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these" (Luke xii. 22-27).

Whatever care you may take of your body and

for your food, not one of you can add an hour¹ to his life. Is it not, then, foolish to trouble yourselves with things over which you have no power?

You know well that your life must end in death, yet none the less you busy yourselves with securing your life by the possession of property. Life cannot be secured by property. Understand, that this is an idle deceit with which you deceive yourselves.

The true significance of life, says Jesus, does not lie in what we have or what we get, or in anything which is outside of us. It must lie in something else.

He says that the life of man consists not in the abundance of his possessions. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have not where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my corn and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou foolish one, this night is thy soul required of thee; and the things which thou hast prepared, whose shall they be? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke xii. 16-21).

Death awaits us all at any and every moment. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lamps burning: and be ye yourselves like unto men looking for their lord, when he shall return from the marriage feast; that, when he cometh and knocketh, they may straightway open unto him. And if he shall come in the second watch, and if in the third, and

¹ The words are incorrectly translated in the orthodox version. The word *ἡλικία* means age—time of life. Therefore the whole proposition signifies, "ye cannot add one hour to your life."

find them so, blessed are those servants. But know this, that if the master of the house had known in what hour the thief was coming, he would have watched, and not have left his house to be broken through. Be ye also ready: for in an hour that ye think not the Son of man cometh" (Luke xii. 35-40).

The parables of the virgins waiting for the coming of the bridegroom, of the end of time, and of the last judgment, all these passages, according to the opinion of all the commentators, refer not only to the end of the world, but also to the nearness and the inevitableness of death.

Death is ever on the watch for you. Your life must be rounded in death. Even while you are working to lay up treasure for yourself in the future, you know that the future ends in death, for you and for all that you have laboured for. Life, then, *for life's sake*, can have no significance. If there be a rational life, it must be some other than this; it must be one whose aim is other than the laying up of treasure for the future. To live rationally, is to so live that death cannot destroy our life.

Jesus says, "Martha, Martha, thou art troubled about many things: but one thing is needful" (Luke x. 41). All the innumerable cares with which we trouble ourselves for the future are useless; they are a delusion with which we mock ourselves. One thing only is needful.

From the day of his birth, inevitable destruction awaits man,—a senseless life and a senseless death,—if he do not find the one thing needful for the true life. What that one thing is Jesus has told us. It is not his invention, nor does he promise to bestow it on us by divine power. He only shows us that besides the personal life, which is an illusion, there is another life which is a truth and no illusion.

In the parable of the vineyard Jesus explains the source of the error which hides this truth from men

and causes them to mistake the shadow—personal life—for the true life (Matt. xxi. 33–42).

Man, dwelling in a well-kept and well-filled garden, fancied himself to be the owner, and from that erroneous fancy sprang a series of foolish and cruel acts, till he has been driven from the garden and excluded from the true life. Even so have we imagined that this life of ours is our own personal possession, our *right*, to be employed as seems best to us, without reference or obligation to others; and having imagined this, we are inevitably led into the same foolish and cruel acts, and the same exclusion from life awaits us. As the husbandmen in the vineyard imagined that the more cruel they were the more would it be to their advantage—causing them to kill the messengers and the master's son—so it appears to us.

As it was with the vine-dressers, who, as they gave to no one the fruits of the garden, were at length driven out by the master, so will it be with those who imagine their personal life to be the true one. Death will drive them out of life, putting other men in their place; not as a punishment, but merely because they do not understand what life should be. As the dwellers in the garden either forgot, or did not choose to remember, that the garden entrusted to them had been ditched in, fenced round, and provided with a well, the work of others who naturally expected from them work in return; so men, living their personal life, have forgotten, or wish to forget, all that has been done for them before their birth, and all that is being done for them at every moment of their lives, and what in consequence is expected of them in return. They wish to forget that all the good things of life by which they profit have been given to them, are being daily given to them, as it were, *in trust for others*.

This correction of man's view of life, this *μεάνοια* or repentance, is the corner-stone of Christ's teaching, as he himself says at the end of the parable. As the vine-dressers living in the vineyard which they had not cultivated should have understood and felt that they owed an unpaid debt to the master, so men are bound to understand and feel that from the day of their birth to the day of their death they remain debtors to those who have lived before them, to their contemporaries, and to those who are to come after them; but, above all, debtors to Him who was, and is, and shall be the end of all. Men should understand that every hour of life in which this debt remains unpaid only confirms it the more, and that therefore a man who lives for himself, denying the obligation which connects him with life and its origin, deprives himself of life. They should see, that, as Christ so often reminds them, the life they lead in their anxiety to preserve it, really ensures its destruction.

True life is that, and that only, which continues beyond this life, and promotes what is good both here and hereafter.

In order to have a part in this life, a man must renounce his own will, and fulfil that of the Father of Life, from whom the Son of man received it.

In the Gospel of John (viii. 35) Jesus practically says, that the bond-servant who doth according to his own will, and not after the will of his master, cannot dwell for ever in his master's house, but that only the son, who fulfils the will of the father, abideth for ever; and this idea he dwells upon in many places.

The will of the Father of Life is the life, not of an individual man, but of the "Son of man" living in men; consequently man preserves his life only when he looks upon it as a pledge, as a talent given to him by the Father for the service of all men;

when he lives not for himself, but for the "Son of man."

See in Matthew xxv. 14-46. A master divided his property between his servants, and without giving them any express instructions went away and left them. Some of these servants, although receiving no instruction as to how they were to use the master's property, understood that it still belonged to him and not to them, and that it must be made profitable. They worked for the master; and these servants who worked for their master became partakers of his life, while those who had not worked for him were deprived even of what had been given them. The life of the "Son of man" has been given to all men, and they have not been told explicitly *why* it has been given to them. Some men have realized that life does not belong to them, but that they have received it as a gift, which must be used in the service of the life of Mankind, and they have lived accordingly. Others, under plea of not understanding the object of life, refuse to serve this life of "the Son of man." Those who serve life are united with the source of life: those who refuse so to serve are deprived of life. In verses 31-46 Jesus tells us what is the service of the "Son of man," and what will be the reward of that service.

The "Son of man," according to Jesus' teaching, will say, as "the King" did, "Come, ye blessed of the Father, inherit the kingdom, because you have given me food and drink, you have clothed and comforted and befriended me. For I am the same in all men: in you, and in the least of those whom ye pitied and to whom ye ministered. You have lived, not the personal life, but the life of the 'Son of man,' and therefore ye shall have life Eternal."

According to all the Gospels, it is only this life Eternal which is revealed by Jesus' teaching. Strange as it may seem, Jesus, who himself is said to

have been raised from the dead, and who promised immortality to all men, never once said a single word in affirmation of personal resurrection or of the immortality of the individual beyond the grave. On the contrary, to the doctrine of the restoration of the dead in the kingdom of the Messiah, as it was conceived by the Pharisees, his uttered words gave an entirely different significance, excluding the conception of an individual resurrection.

The Sadducees denied the restoration of the dead. The Pharisees acknowledged belief in it in the same sense in which it is now acknowledged by the orthodox Jews.

The restoration of the dead (not "resurrection" as the word is incorrectly translated) according to the Jewish doctrine will be accomplished when the time of the Messiah is at hand, and the kingdom of God is established upon earth. Every time that Jesus met with this belief in a temporary local and carnal resurrection, he denied it and replaced it by his own teaching of Eternal Life in God.

When the Sadducees (who denied the restoration of the dead), asked of Jesus (thinking he shared the opinion of the Pharisees) to whom the wife of seven brothers should belong, he clearly and definitely answered both sides.

He told them (Matt. xxii. 29 and 32, Mark xii. 24-27, Luke xx. 34-38,) that they erred, knowing neither the scriptures nor the power of God. Denying the conceptions of the Pharisees, Jesus' words imply, "Resurrection from the dead is neither carnal nor individual. Those who are worthy to attain restoration from death, become the sons of God, and live as angels (the powers of God) in heaven, that is, with God, and no personal questions, as to whom the wife shall belong, can exist for them, because they, in their union with God, have ceased to be individuals." With regard to the question "Whether

there is a restoration of the dead?" he replies thus to the Sadducees, who recognized only the life of the body upon earth and denied all else—"Have you not read what was said to you by God? It is written that from the bush, God spoke to Moses, saying—I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,—if God said that He was the God of Jacob, then Jacob was not dead to God, because God is the God of the living and not of the dead. To God all are living: therefore if there be a living God, the man who has entered into communion with that eternally living God also lives."

So, in answer to the Pharisees, Jesus teaches that the restoration of life cannot be carnal and individual. In answer to the Sadducees, he teaches that beside our personal, temporal life, there is another life, of communion with God.

While denying carnal and individual restoration, Jesus recognizes the restoration of life by the transference of man's personal life to that of God.

Jesus teaches deliverance from individual life, and this deliverance he places in the exaltation of the "Son of man" and in union with God. Blending his own teaching with that of the Jews concerning the coming of the Messiah, Jesus speaks of the restoration of the Son of man to life—meaning not the carnal and individual resurrection from the dead, but the awakening of life in God. As to carnal and personal resurrection, Jesus never said a word about it. The best proof that Jesus never preached the resurrection from the dead is furnished by the only two passages which are quoted by theologians as witnessing to that teaching. Those two passages are Matthew xxv. 31-46 and John v. 28, 29. The former speaks of the "Coming"—that is the restoration of the Son of man (the same is said in Matt. x. 23)—and the power and splendour of the "Son of man" is

compared to that of a king. The second passage speaks of the restoration of true life on earth, as it is expressed in the foregoing twenty-fourth verse.

One has only to reflect upon the significance of the teaching of Jesus concerning Life Eternal in God,—one has only to recollect the doctrines of the Jewish prophets, in order to realize that, if Jesus had wished to preach the resurrection of the dead—which was only then being introduced into the Talmud and was still the subject of controversy—he would have expressed that doctrine clearly and conclusively. This he did not do: on the contrary, he denied the doctrine, and there is not a single passage throughout the Gospels which can be regarded as confirming it. The two aforesaid passages have an entirely different meaning.

However strange it may seem to those who have not personally studied the Gospels, Jesus never spoke a single word concerning his own personal resurrection. If, as theologians teach, the foundation of the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus, surely it seems strange that Jesus, knowing that he would rise from the dead, and that his resurrection would constitute the chief dogma of faith in him, did not speak of it at least once in clear and definite terms. But not only did he not speak of it in such terms, he never once, throughout the whole Canonical Gospels, spoke of it at all,—never alluded to it by a single word.

The teaching of Jesus is of the exaltation of the "Son of man"—that is, of the essence of human life—and of man's recognition of himself as the Son of God. In his own being, Jesus personified the man who has recognized his sonship to God, Matthew xvi. 13-20. He asked his disciples what men said of him—the Son of man? The disciples answered that some believed him to be John, miraculously risen from the dead, and some believed him to be Elijah,

come down from heaven. "Well, and what do you think I am?" asked Jesus. Peter, who understood Jesus as Jesus understood himself, answered, "Thou art the Messiah—the Son of the living God." And Jesus answered, "Not flesh nor blood have revealed this to thee, but our Father which is in heaven," meaning that Peter understood, not through belief in human explanations, but because having recognized himself to be the son of God, he recognized Jesus to be the same. Then, having shown to Peter that this sonship to God is the foundation of the true faith, Jesus charges his disciples not to say that He—Jesus—is the Messiah.

After that, Jesus tells them that although he will be tortured and put to death, nevertheless he—the "Son of man," who has recognized himself to be the "Son of God"—will be re-established and triumph over all. And these words are construed as a prophecy of the "Resurrection"!

John ii. 19-22; Matt. xii. 40; Luke xi. 30; Matt. xvi. 4; Matt. xvi. 21; Mark viii. 31; Luke ix. 22; Matt. xvii. 23; Mark ix. 31; Matt. xx. 19; Mark x. 34; Luke xviii. 33; Matt. xxvi. 32; Mark xiv. 28; are the fourteen passages which are interpreted as Jesus' prophecies of his own resurrection. Three of these passages speak of Jonah in the whale's belly, and one of the restoration of the Temple. The other ten passages affirm that the "Son of man" cannot be destroyed, but in none of them is there a single word referring to the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

In none of them is the word "resurrection" to be found in the original. Let any man conversant with the Greek tongue, but ignorant of the theological rendering, translate these passages, and his version will never agree with the orthodox one. In the original, two different words are employed, "*ἀνίστημι*" and "*ἐγείρω*." The one means to "re-

establish,"—the other, to "awaken,"—or in some senses "to wake oneself," to "rise up." But neither the one nor the other can in any case ever mean "to raise from the dead." In order to be thoroughly convinced that these Greek words and their Hebrew equivalent "Koum" cannot mean "to raise from the dead," we have only to compare all the other passages of the Gospels where these words are employed,—as they frequently are,—and not in one single instance are they translated "to raise from the dead."

The words "resuscitate," "auferstehen," or "resusciter" do not exist in the Greek or Hebrew language, because there was no conception corresponding to them. In order to express the idea in Greek or Hebrew, it is necessary to use a periphrase,—to say "arisen," or "awakened from the dead." In the Gospel of Matthew, xiv. 2, in reference to Herod's belief in the resurrection of John the Baptist the words used are "awakened from the dead." In the parable of Lazarus (Luke xvi. 31), where it is said that even if anyone were resuscitated men would not believe him, the words used are "if one arose from the dead." It is evident that in all the passages where the words "to rise up" or "to awaken" are employed without the addition of the words "from the dead" they can never signify "resurrection," and were never intended to do so. When speaking of himself, Jesus never once used the words "from the dead" in any one of the passages quoted in confirmation of his prophecies concerning his own resurrection.

Our idea of "resurrection" is so utterly alien to the Hebrew conception of life that we cannot even imagine Jesus speaking to the Jews of "resurrection from the dead," and of an eternal, personal life as the attribute of every man. The conception of a future individual life came to us neither from the Hebrew doctrines nor from the teaching of Jesus.

It was transfused into Church doctrine from an entirely different source. However strange it may seem, yet we have to recognize that belief in a future personal life is an extremely crude and barbarous conception, common to all primitive races, and based upon the confusion of death with sleep. The Hebrew doctrines, and still more the Christian one, were immeasurably superior to this. But we are so convinced of the sublimity of this superstition, that we give our adherence to it as a proof of the superiority of our doctrine to that of those who, like the Chinese and the Hindus, do not believe in it.

This opinion is shared not only by theologians, but also by free-thinking and learned historians of religions, such as Thiele, Max Müller, and others. In their classification of religions, they affirm those which hold to the superstition of resurrection to be superior to those that do not. The free-thinking Schopenhauer distinctly calls the Hebrew religion the most contemptible (*niederträchtigste*) of all religions, because it recognizes no conception (*keine idee*) of the immortality of the soul. And indeed the Hebrew religion is devoid both of the conception and of the word. "Eternal life" in the Hebrew is "haieoilom." "Oilom" means "infinite," the "unchangeable in time." It also means the world—the cosmos, Life in itself, and much more so "eternal life";—"Haieoilom"—is the attribute of God alone; God is the God of Life—the living God. To the Hebrew mind, man is always mortal. God alone is always living. In the Pentateuch, we twice meet with the expression "Eternal life"—once in Deuteronomy xxxii. 39 and 40, and once in Genesis. In Deuteronomy xxxii. 39 and 40 God says, "Understand that I am I. There is no God but me. I give life, I kill, I wound, I heal, and none can be delivered from me. I lift my hand to the heavens and say, 'I live forever.'" In Genesis iii. 22 God says that "Man has

eaten of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and has become like unto one of us, and now, perchance, he shall put out his hand and eat of the tree of life and live forever." These are the only two instances of the use of the words "Eternal life" in the Pentateuch, and in the whole of the Old Testament (except in one chapter of the apocryphal book of Daniel). They define clearly the Hebrew conception of life generally and of life Eternal. Life in itself, according to the Hebrew doctrine, is eternal, and such it is in God,—while man, on the contrary, is mortal: mortality is his attribute.

Nowhere in the Old Testament is there any reference to what we are taught in the canons of the theologians—to wit, that God breathed into man an immortal soul, so that the first man was, before the Fall, immortal. According to the *first version* of Genesis (chap. i. 26), God created man in the same manner as the beasts, male and female, and ordered them to bear children and to multiply. As it is not said of the beasts that they are eternal, neither is it said of man. The second chapter narrates how man gained knowledge of good and evil. But concerning man's life, it is distinctly stated that God expelled man from Paradise and barred the way to the Tree of Life. Man did not taste of the Tree of Life, nor did he attain "haieoilom"—eternal life, therefore he is for ever mortal. According to the Hebrew doctrine, man is as we know him to be—mortal. He has life only as life transmitted from one generation to another. The people alone possess the capacity of life. When God said, "You shall live and not die" he said it to humanity. The life breathed by God into man is mortal as regards each separate individual, but it is continued from generation to generation, if men fulfil the covenant with God, that is, observe the conditions prescribed by God.

After Moses had propounded the law, and told the people that it is written not in heaven but in their own hearts, he went on to say (Deut. xxx. 15), "To-day I have set before you life and good, and death and evil, and I exhort you to love God and to walk in His ways, fulfilling His commandments, so that you may have life." And again (19), "I call Heaven and Earth to witness against you: Here are *Life and Death*, the blessing and the curse that I set before you. Therefore, choose life that you may live, you and your descendants, to love God and obey Him, for He is your life and the length of your days."

The chief difference between our conception of human life and that of the Jews is that, according to our ideas, our mortal life, transmitted from generation to generation, is not the true life, but a fallen life, and life, for some reason, temporarily degraded,—whereas, according to Jewish ideas, this life is the most absolute reality, and the supreme good given to man under condition of obedience to the will of God. We believe the transmission of our present fallen life from generation to generation to be a continuation of the curse; the Jews believe it to be the highest happiness that man can attain, and that he attains it only through his fulfilment of the will of God.

It is upon this conception of life that Jesus founds his teaching of true and eternal life, which he contrasts with individual and mortal life. "Examine the scriptures," he says to the Jews, "for in them you think you have eternal life" (John v. 39).

In answer to the youth who asked what he should do to have eternal life, Jesus answered, "If thou wilt enter into life" (he does not say "life eternal" but simply "life") "keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 17). He gives the same answer to the scribe, "This do and thou shalt live" (Luke x. 28). There

also Jesus speaks of life without adding "life eternal." In both instances, Jesus defines what is to be understood by the words "eternal life." In using them, he means exactly what was said over and over again in the Hebrew Law, namely, that the fulfilment of the will of God is Life Eternal. As opposed to the temporal and individual life, Jesus teaches that "eternal life" which, according to Deuteronomy, God promised Israel, but with this difference: that the Jews believed "life eternal" to obtain only among the chosen people of Israel, and to be acquired only by fulfilment of the exclusive laws given by God to Israel, whereas, according to the teaching of Jesus, the "life eternal" is perpetuated by the "Son of man," and is to be acquired by the fulfilment of those laws of Jesus which express the will of God for all humanity.

Jesus contrasts the individual life not with a life beyond the grave, but with the universal life—embracing the Past, Present, and Future Life of all Humanity—the life of the "Son of man."

According to the Hebrew teaching, deliverance of the individual life from death was to be gained by the fulfilment of God's will as expressed by His Commandments in the law of Moses. Only under this condition the life of the Jewish people would not perish, but would be transmitted from generation to generation in the chosen people of God.

According to the teaching of Jesus, deliverance of the individual life from death is to be gained by the fulfilment of God's will as expressed in the commandments of Jesus. Under this condition only, individual life does not perish, but becomes unchangeable and eternal in the Son of man. The difference is only this, that service of the God of Moses is service of the God of our nation; whereas service of the Father of Jesus Christ is service of the God of all men. The perpetuity of life in the

generations of one people was doubtful, because that race itself might disappear, and anyhow, such perpetuity depended on a casual posterity. The perpetuity of life according to the teaching of Jesus is sure, because it is transferred unto the "Son of man" living by the will of the Father.

Even granting that the words of Jesus concerning the last judgment, the end of the world, and other passages in the Gospel of John, convey a promise of future life for the souls of the dead, still it remains certain that his teachings concerning the light of life and the "kingdom of God" had another significance for his hearers eighteen hundred years ago, and for us to-day,—namely, that the only true life is the life of the "Son of man" according to the will of the Father. This can be the more easily admitted, because the teaching of true life by the will of the Father includes the conception of immortality and life beyond the grave.

Perhaps it would be more judicial to suppose that after this life on earth, lived by man in fulfilment of his individual will, he should enter upon another eternal personal life in heaven, full of all manner of joys. But to believe that this is so, to try to convince ourselves that for our good actions we shall be rewarded by eternal bliss and for our evil ones by eternal torment, does not assist us to understand the teaching of Jesus. On the contrary, to believe this is to deprive his teaching of its essential groundwork.

The whole teaching of Jesus consists in the realization, by those who would follow it, of the shadowy nature of individual life, the need for its renunciation and its transference to the universal life of Humanity—the life of the "Son of man." On the other hand, the doctrine of the immortality of the individual soul does not inspire man to renounce his personal life, but, on the contrary, for ever confirms that personality.

In the ideas of Jews, Chinese, Hindus, and all the other races who do not hold with the dogmas of the Fall and Redemption, life is the life we see. Man lives, has children, educates them, grows old and dies; his children grow up and continue his life, which is transmitted without interruption from one generation to another,—just as with all other existing things, stones, metals, plants, animals, the earth and the stars, and all things in the Universe. Life is life, and we must employ it as best we can. To live for oneself alone is unreasonable. Therefore since the beginning of human existence men have always sought for some object in life outside of themselves; they live for their children, their family, their country, and for humanity, for all that does not die with the individual life.

But according to the doctrine of the Church, human life, as the supreme good known to us, is only the smallest particle of the life which, for a time, is held back from us. According to this doctrine, our life is not the life which God wished and should have given us: it is an evil, fallen, and degenerate life—a parody of the life which we imagine God meant to give us. According to this conception, the chief aim of life is not to try to live this mortal life given us in accordance with the will of the Giver of life,—not to render it eternal by transmission to future generations, like the Jews—or by union with the will of the Father, as was taught by Jesus,—but the chief aim of life is to convince ourselves that after this life will begin the real life.

Jesus says not a word about this imaginary life, which God ought to have given us, but for some reason withheld. The theories of Adam's fall, of eternal life in Paradise, and of the immortal soul breathed by God into Adam, were unknown to Jesus, and were never mentioned by him, even in the slightest allusion.

Jesus speaks of life as it is, and as it always will be. We speak of an imaginary life which has never existed. How then can we understand the teaching of Jesus?

Jesus could not have imagined so strange an idea among his followers. He supposes that all men must recognize the necessity of the destruction of individual life, and he reveals to them life indestructible. He gives peace to those who are in trouble; but to those who are convinced that they already have more than Jesus offers, his teaching can give nothing. If I try to persuade a man to work, telling him he will get food and clothing in return, while the man imagines himself to be a millionaire, of course my persuasions will have no effect. It is the same with the teaching of Jesus. Why should I labour for bread when I am already rich? Why should I try to live this life as God wills it, when I am assured that, in any case, I possess an eternal individual life?

We are taught that Christ saved men when he, the Second Person of the Trinity, God, became incarnate, and taking upon himself the sins of Adam, and of all men, atoned for them to the First Person of the Trinity, and established for our salvation his Church and sacraments. Men believe that thus they are saved and obtain an eternal individual life beyond the grave. But it is impossible to deny that Christ saved, and still saves men by this also, that, pointing out to them their inevitable ruin, in his words, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," he shows them the true path of life, in exchange for that treacherous path of individual life which we formerly followed.

Though some may doubt of a life and salvation beyond the grave, founded on the doctrine of the atonement, no one can doubt of the salvation of all men, if they be shown the inevitable ruin of personal

life, and the true path of safety in the union of their will with that of the Father. Let any reasonable man ask himself, what his life and death are, and let him try to give to them any other meaning than that given by Christ!

Any idea of personal life,—unless founded on the renunciation of self to serve others, mankind, the Son of man,—is a phantom which vanishes at the first touch of reason. That my personal life perishes, but that the life of the world after the will of the Father does not perish, and that identification with that will alone gives me the possibility of salvation, I cannot doubt.

But this is so little compared with the sublime religious faith in a future life!

Little, I grant, but it is sure.

I am lost in a snowstorm. One of my companions assures me that he sees lights in the distance and that there is the village. But it is only a delusion, which we believe because we wish to do so. We have searched for those lights and cannot find them. Another comrade goes looking about in the snow, and at last he reaches the road, and cries to us, "Do not go on, the lights you see are in your own fancy; you will but wander about and perish. Here is the road, I am standing on it, and it will lead us to safety." It is very little. While we believed in the lights that shone only in our bewildered eyes we foresaw ourselves in the village, in a warm hut, safe and at rest. Now we have nothing but the hard road. But if we follow the false lights we must surely perish: if we follow the road, we shall surely be saved.

What was I, then, to do, if I alone understood the teaching of Jesus? If I, surrounded by those who neither fulfilled nor understood it, stood alone in my belief?

What was I to do? Live as all did, or live after

the teaching of Jesus? I understood the teaching of Jesus in his commandments, and saw that the fulfilment of them gives happiness to me and to all men on earth. I understood that the fulfilment of these commandments is the will of the Universal Spirit from whom my own life also springs.

I understood further that, with all those around me, I should inevitably perish by a senseless life and death if I did not fulfil the will of the Father, in which alone lay the possibility of safety.

By acting as all do, I shall certainly act contrary to the general good, shall certainly act contrary to the will of the Father of Life, and as certainly deprive myself of the only possibility of bettering my desperate state. By doing what Jesus teaches me, I shall continue the work of men before me, contribute to the good of all men now living and to live after me, and do the will of Him who called me into being, which can alone save me.

The circus is on fire, the crowds crush and suffocate each other, pressing against the door which opens from the inside. There comes one who cries, "Stand away from the door, turn back! The more you press on, the less your hope of safety. Turn back, and you will find a way out and be saved." Whether many or only one listens to the voice makes no difference; having heard and believed, what can I do, but turn back, and call upon all to listen to the voice of him who would save them? I may be suffocated, crushed to death, but nevertheless my sole chance of safety lies in finding the only issue. I cannot but go that way. A saviour must be one in truth, he must save; and the salvation of Christ is real salvation—he appeared, he spake, and the human race was saved.

The circus has been burning an hour; it is needful to haste, if we would save those inside. But the world has been burning for eighteen hundred years,

ever since Jesus said, "I came to cast fire upon the earth; I will feed it till it burn, and it shall burn until men are saved." Why are men here, why does the fire burn, but that men may have the blessing of salvation?

Understanding this, I understood and believed that Jesus is not only the Messiah, the Christ, but the Saviour of the world.

I know there is no other way of escape for myself, or for those who together with me have to endure the pains of this life. I know that for them as for me, the only escape is through the fulfilment of the commands of Jesus, which procure for all the highest possible bliss. Shall I have more difficulties to encounter, shall I die the sooner by following his teaching?

Such a prospect can only alarm one who does not perceive how senseless and empty is his separate personal life, or who imagines that he will not die; but it does not alarm me, for I know that to live for my own individual happiness is the greatest possible folly, and that after so foolish a life I must still die; and so, though I die even as all who have not believed Jesus, my life and death will have sense both for me and for all; they will have been of use for the salvation and the life of all;—and it is this that Jesus taught.

CHAPTER IX.

FAITH AND WORKS

WERE all men to fulfil the teaching of Jesus, the kingdom of God would be come on earth. If I alone fulfil it, I shall have done the best for all, and for myself. There is no other salvation.

But where can I find faith to enable me to fulfil this teaching and always to follow it?

"I believe, Lord, help thou mine unbelief."

The disciples asked Jesus to strengthen their faith. "I desire to do well, but I do ill," says the Apostle Paul.

"It is hard to be saved," is what each says and thinks.

A drowning man calls for help. A rope, which alone can save him, is thrown to him, and he says, "Assure me, before I lay hold of it, that this rope will save me; I believe it will, but still assist my unbelief." What does it all mean? If the man refuse to take hold of the rope, it proves he cannot understand his situation.

How can a Christian, professing to believe in the divinity of Christ and his teaching, however he understand it, still say that he desires to believe, but cannot?

God Himself has visited earth and said, "Eternal suffering, fire, utter and immutable darkness, await you, and here is your salvation—believe and fulfil My teaching." A Christian cannot possibly disbelieve the offered salvation, he cannot refrain from profiting by it, he cannot say, "Help my unbelief."

For a man to speak so, it is evident not only that he doubts his perdition, but that he believes in his safety. Children who, having fallen overboard, are kept floating by the current, by their clothes, or by their feeble struggling, do not realize the danger they are in. A rope is thrown to such a one from the ship, he is told he will certainly perish, and he is implored to catch hold of the rope. (The parables of the woman who found the lost penny, of the shepherd who found his lost sheep, of the feast of the prodigal son, all allude to the same thing.) But the child does not believe. He does not doubt the rope, but he does not know that he is perishing.

Other light-hearted children have told him that he will continue to float happily even when the ship has disappeared. He does not believe that his clothes will be soaked, his little arms tired, and that at last he will suffocate and sink; and therefore he pays no attention to the rope of safety.

In like manner people become persuaded that they will not perish, and so reject the teaching of the Christ-God; continuing to say, "Uphold our belief that we are not perishing."

To do so is impossible. To be assured of their safety they must cease from doing that which causes their ruin, and begin to do what will save them; they must take hold of the rope. But they do not wish to do so, but desire to be convinced that they *are* safe, though under their eyes their fellows perish daily. This desire they call faith, and it is only natural that it never suffices them, and that they always require to be adding new things to it.

And when I understood the teaching of Jesus I saw that this desire was not faith, and that it was this, falsely called faith, that the Apostle James had refuted in his epistle (ii. 14):¹ "What doth it profit, my brethren, if a man *thinks* he hath faith, but have not works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and in lack of daily food, and one of you say unto them, Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled; and yet ye give them not the things needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith if it have not works, is dead in itself. Yea, a man will say, Thou hast faith and I have works; shew me thy faith apart from thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou

¹ This epistle for a long time was not accepted by the Church, and when at last it was, it underwent certain distortions; some words are left out, some are transposed or arbitrarily translated. I have retained the authorized Russian version, correcting only some inaccuracies according to Tischendorf's manuscript.

believest that God is one, thou doest well; the devils also believe, and shudder. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith apart from works is barren? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, in that he offered up Isaac his son upon the altar? Thou seest that faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect. . . . Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith. . . . For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, even so faith apart from works is dead."

James says that the only sign of faith is work, which flows from it, so that the unproductive faith does not exist, and can neither feed others nor assist itself; it is only a desire to believe something, a false verbal assertion that one believes in what one does not believe. According to the definition of the apostle, faith is that which originates action, and action that which completes faith, that is, makes faith be faith.

The Jews asked Jesus (Matt. xxvii. 42; Mark xv. 32; John vi. 30), "What then doest thou for a sign that we may see and believe thee? What workest thou?" "Let him now come down from the cross, that we may see and believe." "He saved others; himself he cannot save. He is the King of Israel; let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe on him."

And to such demands for the enforcement of their faith, Jesus answered, that their desire was vain, and that he could not force them to believe what they would not. "If I tell you, ye will not believe" (Luke xxii. 67). "I told you, and ye believe not. . . . Ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep" (John x. 25, 26).

The Jews demanded precisely what is required by Church-reared Christians—some exterior sign as evidence to Jesus' teaching; but he showed the impossibility of such, and explained that they failed

to believe, not for want of a sign, but because they would not follow the way of life he had shown to his sheep. And he explained further (John v. 44) who his sheep were, why some believe, and others do not, and what is the foundation of faith. How can ye believe, he said, when ye accept teaching¹ (δόξα) one from another, but seek not the teaching from the one God? In order to believe, he said, you must seek the teaching which comes from God alone. "He that speaketh from himself seeketh his own glory" (δόξαν τὴν ἑαυτοῦ): "but he that seeketh the teaching of Him that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John vii. 18). The teaching of life, δόξα, is the foundation of faith, and all action flows spontaneously from faith, and all faith from our idea of life.

There may be an indefinite variety of action, an almost infinite number of beliefs, but there can only be two doctrines of life, one of which Jesus repudiates, the other he accepts. The first—the source of all error—consists in making individual life an essential reality belonging to the man. It is this which has inspired the various beliefs and actions of men of the world, which has now and has had always many followers. The second—preached by all the prophets, and taught by Jesus—is that our individual life only acquires a meaning in the fulfilment of the will of God.

If a man be persuaded that his individuality is of the chief importance to him, he will also believe that personal welfare is the real end of his life, and in accordance with this he will have a faith and modes of action corresponding, either for the accumulation of property, the attainment of celebrity, or the satisfaction of his passions. If a man accept

¹ δόξα, as in many other places, is quite erroneously translated by the word *glory*: δόξα from δονέω means view, judgment, doctrine.

the second doctrine, if he be convinced that life consists solely in accomplishing the will of God, according to the faith of Abraham and the teaching of Jesus, such belief will give colour to his principles, and out of it his actions will flow.

This, then, is the reason why those who believe in a separate personal life cannot accept the teaching of Jesus; and, with this belief, their deeds will always correspond to their faith, and not to their intentions and their words. The desire for miracle, an old and yet present desire, must destroy a simple understanding of life. We may pray, partake of the Communion, become philanthropic, build churches, convert others,—and yet all the while be far from following Jesus, because we will not, as Abraham did, bring our “only son” as a sacrifice. Did Abraham doubt for one moment his duty to sacrifice to the God who alone gave a meaning to his life? Not for one moment did Jesus and his disciples hesitate to give up their lives to others, because in that alone lay the object and blessing of their lives.

It is from this total misunderstanding of the essence of faith which springs the strange desire of men to be persuaded into the belief that it is best to live according to the teaching of Jesus, while at the same time with all the power of their soul, and by all their teaching of the good of individual existence, they strive to live in a way quite at variance to his teaching.

The foundation of our faith lies in the meaning we give to life, and from this meaning proceeds our appreciation of what is important and unimportant in life; our “faith” is, in fact, our conception of all the phenomena of life. Those who possess a faith founded on the conviction of personal welfare, cannot make it coincide with a faith deduced from the teaching of Jesus, any more than his first disciples

could do so. The misconception is frequently and clearly alluded to in the Gospels. The disciples repeatedly asked Jesus to confirm their understanding of his teaching (Matt. xx. 20-28 and Mark x. 35-45). After those words—so terrible to all who believe in individual life and put their happiness in the riches of the world—that they who have riches cannot enter into the kingdom of God, and after the other words—still more terrible to those who believe only in a personal life—that he who forsakes not all, and even life itself, for Christ's sake, shall not be saved—after these words, Peter asks, "What shall we then receive who have forsaken all and followed thee?" Then, according to Mark, James and John—and, according to Matthew, their mother also—ask Jesus to allow them to sit at his side when he shall be in glory. They ask that he should confirm their faith by the promise of reward. To Peter's question, Jesus answered by a parable (Matt. xx. 1-16.) To James, he replies, "Ye know not what ye ask." That is, "You ask the impossible: you do not understand my teaching, which means the renunciation of personal life, and yet you ask personal reward and personal glory. You may drink the cup (live the life) that I drink of: but you cannot be seated by my side; you cannot be equal to me. It is only in life on earth that the great enjoy the power and glory of personal life; but you, my disciples, should know that the significance of life is not in personal happiness but in the service of all men, in humility before all men. Man lives not to be served but to serve, and to give his personal life a ransom for all."

In answer to those demands of his disciples which proved to him how they misunderstood his teaching, Jesus does not tell them "to believe," that is to modify the appreciation of good and evil resulting from their own doctrines (that he knew to be impossible), but he explains to them that real meaning

of life which is the foundation of faith—that is, a true appreciation of what is good and evil, important and unimportant.

In reply to Peter's question, "What reward shall we receive for our sacrifices?" Jesus relates the parable of the workmen who were hired at different times, but received the same remuneration. Jesus revealed Peter's entire misconception of his teaching, which was the cause of his lack of faith. Jesus says, "It is only in the personal and senseless life that reward in proportion to the work done is important and desirable. Belief in remuneration equivalent to the work done is founded on the doctrine of personal life. It arises from a presumption of certain rights which we imagine we possess,—but man has no rights to anything, nor can he have them: he has only duties which he must fulfil for the good accorded to him, and therefore he can exact nothing even though he actually sacrifice his life for others; he cannot return the good that has been given him, and therefore the Master cannot be unjust to him. Therefore if a man claims a right to his life, if he dispute with the Origin of all, with the source from which he received his life, then he proves by that that he has no idea of the real meaning of life."

Men, having received happiness, demand more: having waited, idle and miserable, in the market place, living not at all, the Master summons them and gives them the supreme bliss of life—labour. They accept the offered benefits, and still they are discontented. They set to work with their false doctrine of possessing rights to life and labour, and therefore imagine that their labour must be "remunerated." They do not understand that in labour itself is the highest good which can be accorded to men, for which they ought to return all that is in their power, instead of demanding "reward." No man, having the false conception of

life held by these workmen, can have a true and right faith.

The parable of the Master and the workmen returning from the field, told in answer to the disciples' prayer that Jesus should strengthen their faith, defines more clearly still the basis of the faith which Jesus taught.

On hearing the injunction to pardon one's brother, not seven times but seventy times seven (Luke xvii. 3-10), the disciples, struck by the difficulty of this exhortation, exclaimed, "Yes,—but—it is necessary to believe in order to fulfil that; so increase our faith," just as before they had asked, "What reward shall we have?" The same request is made to-day by all so-called Christians. "I wish to believe but I cannot: confirm in me the belief that the rope of salvation will save me." Such men say, as the Jews said when they demanded miracles, "*Make us believe:—whether by promises or miracles, make us believe in our salvation.*"

The disciples argued as do most of us: "It would be pleasant to go on living our selfish, wilful life of personal welfare, and at the same time to believe that if we were to obey the will of God we should be still happier!"

We all make a similar demand, opposed to the whole of Christ's teaching, and yet are astonished to find faith difficult.

And Jesus answered this radical misunderstanding, which existed then as now, in a parable in which he shows the true nature of faith. Faith proceeds not from blind trust in what he said, but only from the consciousness of one's own position. It is founded solely on the rational consciousness of what it is best to do, being in a certain position; and it is impossible to excite a faith that would not collapse at the first temptation, either by promises of reward or by threats of perdition; for the faith which can move

mountains, which cannot possibly waver, is founded upon the consciousness of inevitable loss, and of the only salvation possible to one so placed. No promises of reward are needed to have faith. It is only necessary to know that the sole salvation from inevitable destruction is in all men living according to the will of the Master. He who has once understood this will not seek for confirmation of his faith, but will work out his salvation without exhortation.

Jesus says, "When the master returns from the field with his labourer he does not bid him to eat at once, but to serve his master, and tend the beasts, and only when this is done does the labourer sit to his own meal. And the man will do so without feeling that he has been unjustly treated, nor does he praise his self-sacrifice, nor expect a reward, or even thanks; he acts so for so he ought to act, and he only does what he knows he must do, because this is the inevitable condition of his service, and at the same time the true welfare of his life. So also you," says Jesus, "when you have done all that is required of you (all that you are bidden to do), regard yourselves as having only done what it is your duty to do. He who understands his position towards the Master will also understand that he can live only by complying with the Master's will, and will also know in what his welfare consists, and will possess that faith to which nothing is impossible." This is the faith that Jesus teaches—the faith that is based upon the rational consciousness of the true meaning of life. †

The foundation of faith, according to the teaching of Jesus is *light*—light in the sense which is opposed to darkness (John i. 9-12). "That was the true light which lighteth every man, coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and they that were his own

received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the right to become children of God." "And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil. For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light, lest his works should be reproved. But he that doeth the truth cometh to the light, that his works may be made manifest, because they have been wrought in God" (John iii. 19-21).

For the man who has understood the teaching of Jesus, there can be no question as to the confirmation of his faith. Faith, according to Jesus' teaching, is founded upon the light—truth. Jesus nowhere calls for faith in himself; he calls only for faith in the truth.

He says to the Jews (John viii. 40), "Ye seek to kill me, a man who hath told you the truth, which I heard from God."

"Which of you convicteth me of sin? If I say truth, why do ye not believe me?" (ver. 46). He says (John xviii. 37), "To this end have I been born, and to this end am I come into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice."

He says (John xiv. 6), "I am the way, the truth, and the life."

In the same chapter he says to his disciples, "The Father shall give you another Comforter, that he may be with you for ever, even the spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth him not, neither knoweth him: ye know him; for he abideth with you, and shall be in you" (vers. 16, 17).

He says that all his teaching is truth—that he himself is truth.

The subject of the teaching of Jesus is truth. Faith in him, therefore, is not confidence in anything

concerning Jesus himself, but it is the knowledge of truth. It is useless to endeavour to persuade a man into the truth of his teaching, or to buy him over to obey it by the promise of rewards. He who understands it will have faith in it, because it is truth. He who knows the truth necessary for his own welfare, cannot but believe in it, as the drowning man, once aware of his danger, cannot but lay hold of the rope that is thrown to save him. The question, therefore, What shall we do that we may believe? is one that proves only our total misunderstanding of the teaching of Jesus.

CHAPTER X

“MY YOKE IS EASY”

WE say that it is difficult to live after the teaching of Jesus. How can it be otherwise when all through our life we industriously hide from ourselves our real position, striving only to confirm our desire that the position is other than it is. We elevate this confidence, re-christened faith, into something sacred, and by every means—by violence, by persuasion, by threats, flattery, deceit—we allure men to accept it.

In this demand for belief in the impossible and unreasonable, we go so far that the very unreasonableness of what we ask to be believed is taken as a sign of its truth. It was a Christian who said *credo quia absurdum*, and others with rapture repeat it, supposing that to demand a belief in the impossible is the best means of ensuring truth.

Not long since a certain clever and learned man told me in conversation that the Christian teaching, touching the moral side of life, was of small import-

ance. "All that is in it," said he, "can be found among the Stoics, the Brahmins, and in the Talmud. The substance of Christianity is not in that, but in the theosophical teaching contained in its dogmas." This means, that what is dear in Christianity, is not what is eternal and common to all humanity, not what is required for life, not what is rational, but something which cannot be understood, which is useless, something in the name of which millions of men have been slaughtered.

We have formed our false view of life and of the world from our own evil passions and corrupt desires; and belief in this false view, connected only externally with the teaching of Jesus, we account the most necessary and important object in life. Were it not for this age-long trust in a lie, the teaching of Jesus would long ago have triumphed.

It is perhaps a terrible thing to say, yet it seems to me that were it not for the Church's commentaries on this teaching, those who are now called Christians would be much nearer to Jesus; they would be much nearer to a rational conception of the good in life than they are now. The moral teaching of all the prophets of mankind would not be closed for them; they would have their own lesser teachers of truth, and would believe in them. But now that the whole truth has been unfolded, it has seemed so terrible to those whose deeds are evil, that they have perverted it into a lie, and all confidence in the real truth has been lost. In our European society, to the testimony of Christ that he came upon earth to bear witness of the truth, and that all who are of the truth must listen to him, we have long since answered in the words of Pilate—"What is truth?"

These words, expressive of such sad and deep irony, we have taken seriously and made a faith of. We all live on earth not only without truth, but in

the firm conviction that of all vain pursuits the vainest is that search for truth which is to determine our knowledge of the meaning of the life of man.

The doctrine which regulates life, which among all nations, up to the times of our European society, was always accounted the most important, concerning which Jesus said that it was the "one thing necessary," is the one thing excluded from our life, from all influence over man's acts. It is relegated to a special institution called the Church, and even those who officiate therein have long ceased to believe in it.

The only window through which light can come, and to which the eyes of all thinking and suffering men are turned, is shut. To the question, "What am I? What am I to do? Cannot you show me a way, through the teaching of that God, who, you say, came to save us, to lighten my life of its burdens?"—the only answer I receive is: "Fulfil the commands of those in authority over you, and believe in the Church!" "But why is our life on earth so bad?" exclaims a despairing voice. "Why is there all this evil? Must I through life take part in it? Cannot it be lightened?" The answer is, "It is impossible. Your wish to live well and to help others to do so is pride; though a beautiful thought, it is vain. The only thing it can save for you is your soul in the next world. If you do not wish to take part in the evil of this world, go out of it."

"This way is open to all," says the Church; "but know also that, if you choose this path, you cannot take part in the life of the world, you must cease to live, and slowly kill yourself."

"There are only two paths," say our teachers: "to believe in and obey those in authority and take part in the evils which we institute; or to leave the world and go into a monastery, abstain from sleep

and food, and stand on a pillar to mortify your flesh, to bow down again and again, and to do nothing at all for your fellow-men.” If you will not do this, you must confess that the teaching of Jesus cannot be fulfilled, must accept the lawless life consecrated by religion, or else renounce life, that is, slowly commit suicide.

Strange as must seem the error to one who understands the teaching of Jesus, the falsehood that, though so good for men it is impracticable,—the other falsehood, that a man who really wishes, not in words but in deed, to fulfil his teaching, must retire from the world, is still more strange.

This erroneous idea that it is better for a man to withdraw from the world than to expose himself to its temptations, is an old one, long known to the Hebrews, but altogether foreign, not only to the spirit of Christianity, but even to Judaism. And it was to refute this very error that the story of the prophet Jonah was written, long before the time of Jesus; a story often and lovingly quoted by him.

Jonah, a prophet, desires to be the only righteous man, and condemns the depravity of the men around him. But God shows him that just because he is a prophet it is his duty to show to erring men the knowledge of the truth, and that, so far from flying from men because of their sins, he should live among them to purge them of those sins, all the more because they are erring. But Jonah despises the depraved Ninevites and flees from them, till God brings him back to them, by means of the whale, and the master's will is accomplished; the Ninevites accept the teaching of God through him, and their life is purified.

But Jonah is not pleased with being the instrument of the divine will; he is vexed, and jealous of the Ninevites—he wishes to be good and wise alone. He retires into the desert, bewailing his lot, and

reproaching God. Then in one night a gourd grows over him, to shelter him from the sun, but in the next a worm destroys the gourd, and Jonah still more bitterly reproaches God, that this gourd, so useful to him, has perished. Then God says, "Thou art sorry for the gourd, which thou callest thine own, in one night it grew and in one night it perished; shall not I have pity on a whole people, which was perishing, living like the beasts, unable to tell the right hand from the left? Thy knowledge of the truth was only needed for thee to give to those who had it not."

Jesus often quoted this story, but it is also related in the Gospels how he himself, after visiting John the Baptist in the wilderness, and before beginning to preach, was subject to the same temptation. He was led by the devil (deceit) into the "wilderness" to be tempted, but, defeating the spirit of deceit by the strength of his soul, went afterwards into Galilee, and from that time forth, turning not from the most depraved of men, he lived among Publicans, Pharisees, and sinners, teaching them the truth.¹

According to the teaching of the Church, Jesus, God in man, gave us an example of life. He passed

¹ Luke iv. 1, 2: Christ was led by the spirit of deceit into the wilderness to be tempted. Matt. iv. 3, 4: The spirit of deceit said to Christ, that he was not the Son of God if he could not of stones make bread. Christ answered, I can live without bread, I live by that which God breathed into me. Then the spirit of deceit said, If so, then throw thyself from the height; thou wilt kill thy flesh, but the spirit breathed into Thee by God shall not perish. Christ answered, My life in the flesh is the will of God. To kill the flesh is to go against the will of God, is to tempt God. Matt. iv. 8-11: Then the spirit of deceit said, If so, then serve the flesh, as well as men do, and the flesh will reward thee. Christ answered, I am powerless over the flesh; my life is in the spirit; but to destroy the flesh I cannot, because the spirit is lodged in it by the will of God, and because, living in the flesh, I can only serve my father, God. Then Christ went out of the wilderness into the world.

the greater part of his days, so far as they are known to us, in the very whirl of life, among publicans and loose women, and in Jerusalem among the Pharisees. His two great commandments are, To love one's neighbour, and To spread the teaching of truth among men; both of which require constant intercourse with the world. And yet we seem to have drawn from them this conclusion, that Jesus teaches us to retire from the world, to have nothing to do with man. In a word, so that we may follow the example of Jesus, we are taught the exact reverse of all he taught and all he did.

According to the interpreters of the Church, Christ's teaching offers, neither to those who live in the world nor to those who have chosen a monastic life, any doctrine of life—any means of bettering it for themselves and others—only the belief of the men of this world, that, though living ill here, we may still be saved in the world to come; while to those who have chosen a life apart it is further ordained, that they should make life here still worse than it is.

This, however, is not as Jesus taught.

He taught truth; and if abstract truth be truth, it is not less the truth when applied practically. If life in God be the only true life, the only life that brings happiness with it, it is not less true or less happy here on earth amid all the changes and chances of the world. If our life here did not confirm Christ's doctrine of life, his teaching would not be true.

Jesus does not call men to leave the better for the worse, but the worse for the better. He pities men, perishing like a flock of wandering sheep, without a shepherd; and he promises them a shepherd and good pasture. He says that his disciples will be persecuted for the sake of his teaching, and that they must have patience and bear the persecutions

of the world with firmness. But he does not say that by following his teaching, they will suffer more than by following the teaching of the world; on the contrary, he foretells misery for the latter, but for those who follow him, eternal happiness.

He does not teach salvation through faith or asceticism; that is, through a deceit of the imagination or through voluntary torments in this life; but he teaches a life, through which, besides salvation from the ruin of personal life, we shall have here on earth less suffering and more happiness than when living for self alone.

He tells men that, if they fulfil his teaching even in the midst of those who neglect it, they will not on that account be more unhappy, but, on the contrary, happier than before. He says it is a sure calculation of worldly wisdom to take no care for the things of this world.

In Mark (x. 28-31) we read: "Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or mother, or father, or children, or lands, for my sake, and for the gospel's sake, but he shall receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life" (Matt. xix. 27; Luke v. 11; xviii. 28).

Jesus, it is true, warns those who listen to him of the persecution they must expect from those who reject him; but he does not say that they will be losers thereby. On the contrary, he promises them more happiness here on earth than will fall to the lot of those who disregard him.

Of this there can be no doubt, both from the clearness of his language and from the whole spirit of his teaching; from his own life, and the life of his disciples. But is it true?

Considering the relative position of the followers of Jesus and the followers of the world from an abstract point of view, it is impossible not to see that the position of the former must be the better one, were it only that they, doing good to every man, do not provoke the hatred of mankind against them. The followers of Jesus, doing evil to none, can be hateful only to evil men. The followers of the world should be hateful to all, for the law of their life is strife—the persecution of one another. The probabilities of suffering are the same for both, but with this difference, that the followers of Jesus will be prepared for it, while the followers of the world will bend the whole strength of their minds to find a way of escape from it; that the former will know that their sufferings are necessary for the world's sake, while the latter will know not why they suffer. Considering the question, then, in this way, the position of Jesus' followers should be preferable to that of the followers of the world. But is it so in reality?

In order to verify this point, let any one recall the difficult moments of his life, his bodily and mental sufferings, and then ask himself in whose name he has borne all these misfortunes; in the name of the world or of Christ? Let any sincere man review the whole current of his life, and he will see that no suffering came from fulfilling the teaching of Jesus; that the greater part of the misfortunes of his life proceeded from his having been led away by the entanglements of the world into opposition to his own better impulses.

In the course of a happy and fortunate life, using those words in their strictly worldly meaning, I have had to bear as many sufferings, brought upon me by the teaching of the world, as ever fell to the lot of a martyr for the name of Jesus. All the hardest moments of my life, from drunkenness and looseness

as a student, to duels, war, ill-health, and the unnatural and tormenting conditions under which I now live, all these form a martyrdom in the name of the teaching of the world.

Remember that I am speaking of a life exceptionally "fortunate," in the common sense of the word; but how many martyrs there are who have suffered, and now suffer, through the teaching of the world, sufferings I cannot even conceive of!

We do not see the difficulties and dangers of fulfilling the teaching of the world, because we consider all that it brings upon us as inevitable.

We are convinced that all these misfortunes (of which we are ourselves the cause) are necessary conditions of our life, and in that conviction lies the very reason why we are unable to understand that Christ's teaching opens up a way of escape from our misfortunes into a life of happiness.

In order to be able to decide the question of the relative happiness of the contrasted lives, we must, at least for the sake of the argument, get rid of this false conception, and with an unbiassed mind look at ourselves and all that goes on around us.

Mingle with a crowd, especially a town crowd; look into those harassed, agitated, sickly faces; recall your own life and that of those whom you have known intimately; remember the violent deaths, the cases of suicide of which you have heard, —and then ask yourself the *cause* of all those miseries, and of that despair which ends in self-murder. You will see, terrible as it seems, that nine-tenths of human sufferings spring from the teaching of the world; that all these sufferings are really needless, and yet unavoidable, and that the majority of men are martyrs to the teaching of the world.

On a wet Sunday one autumn I rode in a tram through the Souharoff Market. For half a mile the car made its way through a compact crowd which

divided to let it pass. From morning to evening these thousands of people, the majority of whom are hungry and in rags, jostle each other in the mud, abusing, cheating, hating each other; and it is the same in all the markets of Moscow. These people pass the evening in public-houses, and taverns, the night in their corners and kennels, and this is the best day of their week! On the Monday they again set about their toilsome work in their pestiferous dens.

Think of the life of these people; of the position they have left for the one they have made for themselves. Think of the unceasing labour they all voluntarily endure, men and women alike, and you will see then that they are truly martyrs.

They have left their houses, and fields, and flocks, many even their wives and children; they have renounced all, even their liberty, and have come to the town to gain what the world considers necessary. And all these, besides the tens of thousands of unfortunates who kill themselves with the vile fare of the night lodging-houses, all, from the factory hands, cabmen, seamstresses, and prostitutes, up to the rich merchants, the State ministers, and their wives, lead a hard and unnatural life; and yet not one has obtained what the world deems needful!

Seek among these people, from the beggar to the rich man, to find the one who has earned what the world thinks necessary, and you will find barely one out of a thousand. Each struggles with all his strength to obtain not what he wants but what the world requires of him, and what he in consequence believes himself to be miserable without. No sooner has he won it, than he is called upon to obtain more and still more; and so on and ever on without end, progresses that labour of Sisyphus, ruining the lives of all who pursue it.

Take the scale of income, from those who spend three hundred roubles a year up to those who spend

fifty thousand, and how seldom will you find a man who is not jaded and worn out with working for four hundred when he has three, for five hundred when he has four, and so on without end. There is not one with an income of five hundred who would voluntarily change places with another who has four. If there are some who do so, it is only for the chance of making money more quietly and surely. All want more and more to make the best of their labour, and then to give this best, their life, their soul, without reserve to the world. He who has to-day a coat and boots, will to-morrow want a watch and chain, the next day apartments with sofas and lamps; next, carpets in the drawing-room and fine clothes; afterwards he must buy a house, horses, pictures in gilt frames, till finally he falls ill from overwork, and death ends the struggle. Another takes his place, and gives his labour and his life to the same Moloch, till he, too, dies in ignorance of all he has been working for. Can such a life be truly a happy one? Grant him all that men call happiness, and yet, how wretched is his life.

What are the main conditions of physical happiness, those which cannot be disputed?

One of the first and most generally acknowledged conditions of physical happiness is a life which does not break the link between man and nature, a life in the open air, and in the light of the sun; an intimate connection with the earth, the plants, the animals. To be deprived of such a life has been considered at all times and among all men the greatest misfortune. Prisoners feel this deprivation more acutely than all others.

Yet look at the life of worldly men. The greater their success, the farther are they from these conditions of happiness; the greater their worldly happiness, the less they see of the sun, of the fields, the woods, and the animals that dwell therein.

Many of them, and especially the women, live to old age without having more than once or twice, perhaps, seen the rising of the sun, without having ever seen the fields and the woods, save from a carriage or a train, and without having themselves either sown or planted anything, or fed, or reared any domestic beast.

Such people see only stuffs and stones and wood wrought upon by human labour, and even these they see not by the light of the sun, but by an artificial light; they hear only the sound of carriages, machines, cannons, and musical instruments; and underfoot or in their hands they have nought but the products of handicraft, they smell only the fumes of scents, wines, and tobacco-smoke; and for the most part they eat, through the weakness of their digestion, what is not fresh but tainted. Their constant journeys from place to place do not bring them nearer to nature, for they travel in shut-up boxes. In the country and abroad, wherever they go, the same stuffs and wood are beneath their feet, the same curtains hide from them the light of the sun, the same lackeys and coachmen do not allow them to touch the ground, the plants, or the animals. Wherever they are, they are deprived, as though they were prisoners, of this condition of happiness. And as prisoners console themselves with the blades of grass in the court of their prison, with spiders, and with mice, so these people console themselves with consumptive house-plants, parrots, lap-dogs, and monkeys, on which, however, they still bestow no care themselves.

Another indisputable condition of happiness is labour; congenial, free, physical labour, which encourages a good appetite and sound, restorative sleep. And again, the greater the good-fortune which people have in this world, the more they lack this second condition of happiness. All the "fortun-

ate ones" of the world, the great dignitaries, and the rich, either, like imprisoned criminals, are altogether deprived of physical labour, and contend in vain with illness caused by the want of physical exertion, and still more unsuccessfully with *ennui* (I say unsuccessfully, because labour is only sweet when it is useful and needed, and these people want for nothing), or they are obliged to put up with work they dislike—bankers, for instance, lawyers, governors of towns, or ministers—while their wives decorate saloons, buy rich services of plate, and dress out more richly still themselves and their children. I say, work they dislike, for who has ever met among them one who took pride in his work, or performed it with the same zest with which the doorkeeper sweeps away the snow from before the house? These "fortunate ones," then, are either quite without work, or have only work which they dislike; they are, indeed, in the condition of men condemned to penal servitude.

A third condition of happiness is family life. Here, again, the greater the worldly success the less is this happiness possible. Many are adulterers who voluntarily reject the joy of family life, and think only of its inconvenience. Even when they are not guilty of adultery, children are not a joy to them, but a burden, and in order to avoid having them they sometimes employ criminal means. And when they have children, they rarely have the pleasure of their society. According to the laws of their life, they must give them over to the care of others, mostly entire strangers; at first to foreigners, and afterwards to public educational establishments. To such parents what does a family bring but the grief of having children who from infancy are as unhappy as themselves, and who often have only one feeling towards their parents,—a desire for their death in order to inherit their property!

Sufficiently astounding is the justification of this mode of life often heard from parents. "I am in want of nothing," says the parent, "though my life is a hard one; but I love my children, and I live thus for their sakes." That is to say, "I know for a certainty by experience that our life is unhappy, and therefore I educate my children to be as unhappy as I am. With that aim I bring them to the place where physical and moral infection is concentrated—to a town—give them over into the hands of strangers, who in their education have only interested motives, and thus corrupt my children physically, morally, and intellectually." And this is the argument which justifies the unreasonable life of the parents themselves! They are not prisoners, but their family life entails on them more suffering than the absence of it inflicts on the imprisoned.

A fourth condition is a free and live intercourse with all the various classes of mankind. Here again, the higher that people have risen in the world, the more they miss this important condition of happiness. The higher your position, the narrower and more limited is the range of your intercourse, and the lower in intellectual and moral development are the few who form that charmed circle from which there is no escape.

To the peasant and his wife the whole world lies open, and if there be a million of men who will not associate with him, he has eighty other millions left of the labouring classes, with whom, from Archangel to Astrachan, without waiting for a visit or an introduction, he can enter at once into the most intimate brotherly relations.

For the government official and his wife there are hundreds who are his equals, but the higher class will not receive him, and the lower are cut off from him. For the rich man of the world there are worldly families enough, but from the rest he is

wholly separated. For the minister and the man of great wealth there is a tenth part of society as important or wealthy as themselves. For emperors and kings the circle becomes smaller still. Is not this truly imprisonment, with the possibility of communication with only two or three of the prisoner's gaolers?

There is also a fifth essential condition of happiness,—health, and a natural and painless death. Here once more, the higher a man's social position, the less chance he has of these blessings. Compare a man in easy circumstances with the average peasant, and notwithstanding the hunger and excessive toil the latter must endure (not through his own fault but through the cruelty of his superiors), you will see that the lower on the social scale the healthier they are, and the higher, the more sickly, is true both of the men and the women.

Recall to mind all the rich men and women you have known, and you will see that most of them are invalids. Amongst them, a healthy man who does not doctor himself continually, or at least periodically every summer, is as much an exception as is an invalid among the labouring classes. These favourites of fortune practise secret vices which, among them, have become an attribute of early youth. They are toothless, bald or grey-headed at an age when the labourer is in the prime of manhood. Almost all are subject to nervous, stomacic, or sexual diseases arising from gluttony, drunkenness, debauchery, or drugging. Those who do not die young pass half their life in dosing themselves, or injecting morphia, and become miserable wrecks incapable of independent existence, living like parasites, or like those ants that are fed by their slaves. Consider their deaths. One committed suicide; another rotted away from syphilis; this old man succumbed to sexual excesses; this young one died in the middle

of a castigation administered to stimulate his sexual passions. One was eaten alive by lice, another by worms. One died of gluttony, another of drunkenness, a third from the use of morphia, a fourth from an induced abortion. One after another they perish, in the name of the world's teaching. And the multitude presses on behind them, and like martyrs they seek the same suffering, the same destruction.

Thus is one life after another cast beneath the wheels of the chariot of this fatal god that crushes out these lives, and yet new victims, with groans and sobs and curses, throw themselves ever beneath it.

“ To follow the teaching of Christ is difficult ! ” Christ says, Whoso wishes to follow me must leave house, and fields, and brothers for me, his God, and he shall receive in this world a hundredfold more houses, and fields, and brothers, and, moreover, life eternal. But no one follows him.

The teaching of the world says, “ Leave house, and fields, and friends, and brothers ; leave the country for the unwholesome town ; pass your life in the public baths, soaping the backs of strangers, standing naked in hot steam ; or as a petty clerk, counting other men's kopecks in a damp dark cellar ; or as a public prosecutor in tribunals, immersed in papers, occupied in making the lives of unhappy wretches still more miserable ; or as a minister of State, always signing in haste useless documents ; or as an officer, always bent on killing other men,—live this unnatural life, that must end in a painful death, and you shall receive nothing either in this world or in the world to come.” And this call all obey.

Christ says, “ Take up thy cross and follow me ” ; that is, “ bear patiently the lot awarded thee, and obey Him who is thy God ” ; yet none obey.

But the first worthless man, fitted for nothing but murder, who wears epaulettes and takes it into his head to say—Take not up a cross, but a knapsack and

a gun, and follow me to inflict and undergo misery and certain death, is listened to, and obeyed by all.

Abandoning family, parents, wives, and children, dressed like buffoons, and obeying the will of the first man of higher rank they meet, starving, worn out by long marches, men follow they know not where, like a herd of cattle to the slaughter-house. But they are not cattle, they are men. They cannot but know whither they are driven. With the unanswered question of "Why?" on their lips, with despair in their hearts, they march to die from cold, and hunger, and disease, from the fire of bullets and cannon-balls. They slay and are slain; yet not one of them knows why or wherefore this is so. They are roasted alive, flayed, disembowelled; but the next day again, at the call of the trumpet, the survivors march with their eyes open, to suffering and death. Yet no one finds any difficulty in obeying such commands. Not only the sufferers themselves, but their fathers and mothers see no difficulty; nay, they even urge their children to obedience. It seems to them that obedience to such commands not only is and must be expedient, but is a wise and moral law.

We might believe that the teaching of Jesus is difficult, terrible, and leads to suffering, were the consequences of the teaching of the world easy, and safe, and agreeable. But in reality the teaching of the world is more difficult to fulfil, more dangerous, more fraught with suffering than that of Jesus.

There were, it is said, at one time Christian martyrs, but they were exceptions; it has been calculated that their number has reached 380,000 during eighteen hundred years. But if we count the martyrs to the world, for every single martyr to Christ we shall find a thousand martyrs of the world, whose sufferings have been a hundredfold greater. By death in war alone during the nineteenth century thirty millions of men have fallen!

These men were all martyrs to the teaching of the world. Putting the teaching of Christ aside, had they but forborne to follow that of the world, what sufferings and death would they have escaped!

If a man in a conscript country follows his own inclinations and refuses the life of a soldier, he will be sent to dig ditches; but this at least is better than being done to death at Sebastopol or Plevna! A man need only deny that doctrine which teaches him that he must wear fine clothes and a gold chain and have a useless drawing-room; he has only to satisfy himself that he need not commit all the follies required of him by the world, and he will never know overwork and suffering, he will never know these eternal cares, that labour without rest or object; he will never be debarred from intercourse with nature, from the work he delights in, from his family, and from health; and finally, he will not die a senseless and painful death.

Jesus never taught men that martyrdom in his name was necessary. But he did teach them to cease from tormenting themselves in the name of the false teaching of the world.

The teaching of Jesus has a deep metaphysical meaning; it has a universal meaning, in the sense that it is applicable to all humanity; it has also a simple, clear, practical meaning for the life of every individual man. This meaning may be expressed thus: Jesus teaches men that they need not and should not act foolishly. This is the simple meaning, which all can understand, of the teaching of Jesus.

He tells us to avoid anger, to despise no man; that to do so is foolish, and that fools will suffer. He also tells us not to spend our time running after many women, but to keep faithful to one; not to bind ourselves by promises to any one, because in keeping them we may be obliged to commit foolish or even evil actions. He tells us not to render evil

for evil, or the evil will return upon ourselves two-fold, like the log of wood suspended over the honey by which the bear is killed. He tells us not to call people strangers, merely because they live in another country than ours and speak another language; with the same eyes that we look on them with, will they see us. "Shun these follies," says Jesus, "and it will be well with you."

"Yes," men reply, "but the world is so constituted that to oppose its institutions is to suffer more hardships than are incurred by accepting them. Let a man refuse to enter the army, and he will be sent to prison, possibly even shot. Let a man fail to provide for the support of himself and his family, and he and they will die of hunger." Thus men argue, striving against the dictate of their heart to defend the institutions of the world. They argue thus only because they cannot deny the truth of Christ's teaching; they profess to believe in him, and they must therefore somehow prove that they fulfil his teaching. As a matter of fact they have never really thought of the matter at all. They believe in the world's teaching, and they make use of an excuse taught them by the Church,—that to fulfil the teaching of Jesus entails much suffering,—and never even try to fulfil it.

We see countless sufferings which men endure through following the teaching of the world, but in our day we never see suffering for the sake of Christ's teaching. Thirty millions have perished for the world's sake in war, and thousands of millions have fallen by other deaths after a life of torment; but I know of no millions, nor thousands, nor tens, who have perished for the teaching of Jesus; no, nor even of a single man who need endure hunger or cold for his sake. We fabricate this excuse and thereby prove our stupendous ignorance of his teaching. It is not only that we do not believe,—we have never even treated the belief seriously.

The interpretations of the Churches have made it, not a doctrine of life but a bugbear to us. Jesus invites all men to drink of a spring which is there at hand beside them. Faint with thirst, they drink the blood of one another, while their teachers tell them they will perish if they drink at the spring to which Jesus invites them. And men believe, enduring torments of thirst, even death itself, within a few paces of the living water they dare not approach. But we have only to believe Jesus, to believe that he brought good upon earth, to believe in the fresh water he shows us to quench our thirst; we have only to come to him, to see how crafty is the deceit, and how senseless our sufferings when our salvation is so near. We have only to accept his teaching, and that terrible deception in which we each and all live will stand out clearly before us.

Generation after generation we have struggled to maintain ourselves by violence and the assurance of property. The happiness of our life has lain in the amount of authority and of property we possess. We are so accustomed to this, that Christ's doctrine as to the part which power and property have in man's happiness, namely, that a rich man cannot be happy, appears to us only a new demand for victims in the name of future bliss.

Yet he calls us to no sacrifice; on the contrary, he offers us not the worse but the better part of life. Loving all men, he teaches them to refrain from maintaining themselves by violence and from the mere heaping up of riches, even as other men teach men to refrain from brawls and drunkenness. He tells men that, living without violence and without property, they will be happier than they are now, and by the example of his life he confirms his words. He tells them that, living after his teaching, they must be prepared to die at any moment by violence or cold or hunger, and must not calculate on a single

hour of life. And this seems to us a terrible demand for victims, yet it is only a confirmation of the conditions under which every one of us inevitably lives now. The disciple of Jesus should be prepared at every instant for suffering and death; but is not the disciple of the world exactly in the same position?

We are so accustomed to our self-deceit, that all that we do under the pretence of provision for our needs,—our troops and fortresses, our stores, our dress, our medical treatment, our goods, our money, all seem to us things which really and truly are a security for our lives. We forget what happened to him who thought to build himself granaries to lay up provisions in for his life, and who died the same night. Truly, all that we do to secure to ourselves prosperity is exactly what the ostrich does, who hides his head that he may not see his death. Nay, we do worse than the ostrich; for in order doubtfully to assure our lives in a doubtful future, we certainly spoil them in what might be a certain present.

The deceit consists in a false persuasion that our lives may be secured by strife with other men. We are so accustomed to this false view, that we do not see how much we lose through it; we do not see that we lose all, even life itself. Devoting our whole life to make preparation for its security, we have no leisure to profit by life itself.

It is worth while for a moment to get rid of this deception, and to regard our life from the outside, as an impartial spectator. How clearly, then, we see that all we do to attain this pretended security does not really effect its object, but instead leads us to forget that our life is never secure and cannot be so. But it is not enough that we deceive ourselves and ruin our actual life for an imaginary one,—in this impulse we oftenest of all ruin the very thing which we wish to preserve. The French, in 1870, rose in arms to protect their existence, and hundreds of

thousands of Frenchmen perished in consequence; this is the case with every nation that takes up arms. The rich man thinks to secure his life with money; and it is this very money that attracts the robber who kills him. The hypochondriac thinks to secure his life by medical treatment, and the very treatment slowly kills him,—or at least deprives him of all real life, like the man who lay thirty-eight useless years at the pool of Siloam.

Jesus, who teaches us that life cannot be made secure, and that we must be ready for death at any moment, is surely a safer guide than the world which bids us secure life as the capital necessity of existence. In both doctrines the certainty of death and the insecurity of life remain the same; but, according to Jesus, life itself, not being spent in the vain occupation of obtaining a fancied security, is free to be devoted to its one natural aim, the good of ourselves and of all men.

The follower of Jesus will be poor. Yes, but he will always enjoy the good things which God has given him; and he will not ruin his life. The word "poverty" with men includes misery, but in reality it need not do so.

The country labourer is "poor"; which means that he does not live in the town but in the country; he does not sit idle at home, but works in the forest or in the field; he sees the light of the sun, the earth, the sky, the animals; he does not trouble himself how to provoke his appetite, or how he may assist his digestion. Three times each day he is hungry; he sleeps soundly with no thought of soft cushions, or fear of wakeful nights. His children live with him, he has free intercourse with all men, and, first condition of all happiness, he need do nothing that he does not wish to do, and need not fear the future. He will be ill, and suffer and die, as all men do, but his death, experience shows us,

will be easier than the death of the rich man, as his life will assuredly have been more happy. Christ taught us that we must be poor: we must be penniless and wanderers (*πρόχος* means "wanderer") else we cannot enter into the kingdom of God, nor can we be happy here on earth.

"But no one will give you food, and you will die of hunger," is the objection; and this objection Jesus answers in a short sentence (the one generally used to justify sloth in the clergy). In Matt. x. 10 and in Luke ix. 3, he said, "Get you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, no wallet for your journey, neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff; for the labourer is worthy of his food." In the house which you enter eat and drink what is offered you, for the labourer is worthy of reward for his labour.

The labourer is worthy, means, literally, may and ought to have sustenance. It is a terse saying, but he who understands it as Jesus meant him to understand it will never argue that a poor man must die of hunger. To understand the real meaning we must first get completely rid of the idea, so familiar to us, that the happiness of man lies in idleness. We must go back to the idea, natural to all uncorrupted men, that a necessary condition of happiness is, not idleness, but work; that a man cannot cease to work, for idleness is as wearisome and difficult to him as to an ant, to a bird, and to every wild animal. We must throw aside the old and artificial idea that man with an inexhaustible rouble in his pocket, a government post, or landed property, or money in the funds, on which he can live in idleness—is in a natural and happy condition. We must go back to the primitive view of labour, the view of Jesus, that the labourer is worthy of his food. To Jesus it seemed impossible that men should look upon labour as a curse; he could not conceive a man not working or not wishing to work. He

always takes it for granted that his followers will work. Therefore he says, If a man work, his work will give him food. If the work of one man be hired by another, then he who hires will feed him who works, in order to profit by his work. Therefore he who labours will always have food. Property he will not have, but for his existence he need have no fear.

The chief difference on this point between the teaching of Jesus and that of the world is this,—the latter considers labour a special merit in a man, giving him a claim on others, and enabling him to assert his right to a larger sustenance in proportion to the amount of his labour; while the former considers it the necessary condition of life, and food an inevitable consequence. Labour provides food, food provides labour—in a never-ending circle: each in turn the consequence and cause of the other. However bad the master be, he will feed his labourer as he will his horse; will feed him so that he may work as long as possible,—that is, he will contribute towards the attainment of the greatest good for the man.

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Jesus teaches that every man, whatever the world may be, will have a better life if he understands that his mission is not to demand labour from others, but to devote his life to working for others, "to give his life as a ransom for many." A man who acts thus, says Jesus, is worthy of his food; that is, he cannot fail to obtain it.

By the words "A man does not live to be worked for, but to work for others," Jesus asserts a principle which undoubtedly secures material existence, and by the words, "A labourer is worthy of his food," Jesus sets aside the customary objection to his teaching that one man fulfilling it in the midst of

those who do not, will perish of hunger and cold. He shows that a man secures his means of livelihood, not by wresting it from others, but by making himself useful and necessary to others. The more necessary he is to others, the more certain will he be of his own livelihood.

Even in the present state of the world, those who do not follow the law of Jesus but still labour for the benefit of their fellow-men, though they have no property, do not die of hunger. How, then, can the common objection to the teaching of Jesus stand? No man can die of hunger while a rich man has bread. In Russia there are, now and always, millions of men who live without any personal property, solely by the work of their hands.

A Christian's certainty of provision for his needs will be as great among the heathen as among Christians. He labours for others, consequently he is necessary to them, and will be cared for. A dog that is useful is fed and taken care of: who, then, would not take care of a man needed by all?

"But a sick man, a man with a family, with children, he is not wanted, and cannot work. Men will cease to feed him," say those who desire to prove that the world's teaching is right. So they say, but in reality their actions dispute their words, for, while they do not admit the practicability of Christ's teaching, they nevertheless act according to it. They do not cease to feed sheep or oxen or dogs, when they are ill; they will not even have an old horse put to death, but give it work according to its strength; they rear the young of animals that when grown they may gain a profit from them; will they not then take care of a man when he is ill? find work suited to the strength of the old and the young? bring up those who will labour for them? And, in point of fact, they do all this. Nine-tenths of men, the lower classes, are fed by

the other tenth, the rich and powerful class, as working cattle are. But, however gross the error in which that tenth lives, however much it may despise the rest of mankind, it will never use its power to take from them the means of subsistence, it will never take away the means of life from the class whose labour it needs. This one-tenth has of late worked openly and avowedly to the end that the other nine should be decently maintained, so that they should be able to furnish the greatest possible amount of labour and multiply and bring up new labourers. The ants even breed and rear their milch cows; will not men do the same, then, and cause those who work for them to increase? Labourers are needed, and those who profit by labour will always take care of those by whom the profit comes.

The objection to the practicability of Christ's teaching that, if I do not acquire something for myself, and keep what I have acquired, no one will support my family, is true only with respect to slothful, useless, and therefore pernicious men, such as the majority of our richer classes. Idle people no one will maintain except deluded parents, for they are necessary to no one, not even to themselves; but even the evil-minded will care for and support the one who works. Men rear calves, and man himself is a working animal, more useful than an ox, as the price paid for him in the slave-market clearly shows. And children need never remain without some calling in life.

A man does not live to be worked for, but to work for others. He who will labour need never fear want.

This is a truth which the life of the whole world confirms.

In all times and countries the working man has earned a livelihood, as a horse earns his fodder, but

he has taken it grudgingly, longing only meanwhile for one thing—to be free from the necessity of labour, to heap up all the money he could, and to sit on the neck of him who at some time has sat on his. A labourer, even of this unwilling kind, finds means of sustenance, and is happier than he who lives his whole life on the labour of others. How much happier, then, will he be who labours in the spirit of the teaching of Jesus with all his strength, without troubling about the reward! How still more happy will be the position of such a man, when he finds around him a few, or, it may be, many like himself, ready and glad to do him every service in their power!

Christ's teaching on this subject is shown in the narrative of the thousands fed with two fishes and five loaves. Humanity will have attained its highest possible welfare when men cease to try to grasp everything for themselves, and live according to Christ's system. Thousands had to be fed. Jesus was told by one of his disciples that a man was present who had a few fishes and that other disciples had some loaves. He understood that as the people had come from a distance, some would have food with them and some not. (That many of them had a certain stock is proved by the fact related in all the four Gospels, that at the end of the meal twelve baskets of fragments were collected. If no one but the boy had had anything there would not have been twelve baskets in the field.)

If Christ had not wrought this miracle of feeding several thousand people with a few loaves, what happens now in the world would have happened then. Those who had provisions would have eaten more than they needed and left nothing for the others. The stingy ones, perhaps, would have carried home what they had left. Those who had left nothing would have remained hungry, look-

ing on with angry envy at those who were eating; some might have stolen from their neighbours, and there would have been quarrels and fighting; some would have gone home filled, others hungry and angry: it would have been but a repetition of what happens with us in daily life.

But Jesus, with full knowledge of his purpose, ordered the multitude to sit round, told his disciples to give to others what they had, and to tell the people to do the same. Then, when all those who had provisions had followed the example of the disciples, that is, had given of their own to others, all had sufficient; as the food went round the circle those obtained food who had none in the beginning; thus all were satisfied, and there remained so much that twelve baskets were filled with the surplus bread.

By this, Jesus teaches men what should be the law of human life. Labour is the necessary condition of man's existence, the source of all material good; to keep from others, then, the fruits of our own labour or of theirs, is to hinder the welfare of mankind, whereas to labour for others contributes to the general welfare.

"If men do not take what they want from others, they will die of hunger," it is answered. We ought rather to say, "If men, to supply their own wants, rob each other, some will be left in misery and will perish"; as is indeed the case now.

Every man, whether he live by the law of Jesus, or by that of the world, lives on the labour of others. Others have reared him, are taking care of him, and feeding him; and so it will ever be. But the world says that a man by threats and violence must force others to continue to support him and his family. Jesus, too, says that a man is fed and cared for by others, but to ensure this state of things lasting he should not employ force, but should himself try to serve others, to be as useful as he can to all, and

thus become necessary to all. Men of the world will always desire to cease to support a man who is unnecessary to them, and forces them to work for him; in fact, at the first opportunity they not only cease to support him, but are ready even to kill him as useless.

Which, then, is the surest, the most reasonable, and the happiest way to live—according to the world, or according to Christ?

CHAPTER XI

THE DEAD CHURCH

THE teaching of Jesus seeks to establish the kingdom of God upon earth, and it is a mistake to believe that its fulfilment is difficult. Not only is it not difficult, but it will be fulfilled inevitably by the man who has once understood it. It furnishes the only possible means of salvation from the otherwise certain ruin of an individual existence. Nor does its fulfilment entail on us privations, on the contrary it delivers us from nine-tenths of the sufferings which we undergo for the sake of the world's teaching.

Having come to understand this, then, I asked myself, "Why have I hitherto neglected this teaching, which brings me good, salvation, and joy? Why have I put into practice a very different one, which has brought me only misery?" The answer could only be, and was, this: "I did not know the truth; it had too long been hidden from me."

When first the meaning of Christ's teaching lay clear before me, I did not for a moment think it would tend to the denial of the teaching of the Church. It seemed to me only that the Church had not reached the full conclusion which flows from

the teaching of Jesus. I did not foresee that this new light would separate me from the Church, yet, in the course of my investigations, fearing that it might, I was not keen to discover the faults of the Church, and even wilfully closed my eyes to the propositions which appeared obscure and strange though not opposed to what I then considered the substance of Christian faith.

But the further I went in the study of the Gospels, and the more clearly I perceived Christ's meaning in all he taught, the more inevitable it became for me to make my choice. On the one hand lay the teaching of Jesus, reasonable, clear, appealing to my conscience, offering me salvation; on the other, a doctrine directly opposed to it, which my reason and conscience alike rejected, and which gave me nothing beyond a conviction of the ruin of myself and of all men. I could not but throw aside, one after the other, the propositions of the Church. I did so with reluctance, with a struggle, with the wish to soften as much as possible my dissent from her principles, in order not to quit her fold, not to lose that most pleasant stay of faith—intercourse with the rest of my kind.

But when I had finished my study, I saw that, hard as I might try to retain something, nothing could really remain.

About this time the following incident occurred. My son told me of a dispute between two men employed by me,—neither of whom could do more than barely read or write,—about a certain religious book, in which it was taught that it was no sin to put criminals to death, or to kill men in war. I could not believe that this was in print, and asked for the book, which was entitled, "A Book of Prayer with Explanations," 3rd edition (the 80th thousand), Moscow, 1879. On the 163rd page I found the following:—

“What is the sixth commandment?—Thou shalt not kill.

“What does God forbid by this commandment?—He forbids us to kill, *i.e.* to deprive a man of life.

“Is it a sin to punish criminals according to law by death, and to kill enemies in war?—It is no sin. A criminal’s life is taken to put an end to a great evil which he commits; enemies are killed in war, because in war men fight for their sovereign and for their country.”

This is all the explanation why this commandment of God is annulled. I could not believe my eyes.

The disputants asked for my opinion. I told the one who agreed with what was printed in the book that the explanation was wrong.

“How is that? Do they print things against the law?” he asked, and I had no answer for him. I kept the book, and looked through it. It contained (1) Thirty-one prayers, with instructions for genuflexions and the folding of the hands in sign of the cross; (2) An explanation of the creeds; (3) The Beatitudes from the fifth chapter of Matthew (for some reason called commandments for the attainment of bliss); (4) The Ten Commandments (with explanations for the most part abolishing them); and (5) Canticles for the holy days.

As I have said, I not only strove to avoid condemning the faith of our Church,—I tried to look at it from its best point of view. I did not, therefore, seek for her weaknesses, and, though well acquainted with the academical literature of the Church, I was ignorant of her books for general religious instruction. This book of prayer, already distributed in such enormous numbers, and provoking the doubts of the simplest persons, astonished me.

I could not believe that a prayer-book, the contents of which were so entirely pagan, so

entirely devoid of Christianity, could be deliberately distributed by the Church among her sons. To verify this, I bought and read all the books published by the Synod, or with its "benediction," containing expositions of the faith of the Church for children and for the people.

Their contents were to me almost new. At the time when I attended classes for religion it was different. As far as I remember, there were then no "commandments for the attainment of bliss," no doctrine that "killing was not a sin."

In all the old Russian catechisms these doctrines certainly did not exist, nor are they in the short Catholic catechisms. The new system was introduced by Philaret, who also composed a catechism for the military class. The "Book of Prayer with Explanations" was composed according to his catechism. The principal work is the widely spread "Christian Catechism for the Orthodox (Greek) Church," for the use of all orthodox Christians, issued by command of his Majesty the Emperor.

The book is divided into three parts: Faith, Hope, and Love. The first is an analysis of the Nicene Creed. The second, an analysis of the Lord's Prayer, and of the eight verses of the fifth chapter of Matthew which form the introduction of the Sermon on the Mount, called the "commandments for the attainment of bliss." In both these parts the dogmas of the Church, her prayers, and sacraments are discussed, but there is nothing concerning actual life.

In the third part the duties of a Christian are laid down. In this part, called "Love," are given not the commandments of Jesus, but the ten commandments of Moses, and they are laid down as if for the express purpose of teaching men to disobey them. After each commandment there is a modification which is practically an abrogation; in ex-

planation of the first, ordering man to worship God alone, the catechism teaches how to worship the angels and saints, besides the mother of God and the Three Persons of the Trinity. After the second, to make no idols, the catechism teaches the worship of images. In the case of the third commandment, not to swear idly, the catechism teaches us to swear whenever required to do so by the legal authorities. After the fourth, to keep the Saturday holy, the catechism teaches us to keep holy, not the Saturday, but the Sunday, as well as thirteen of the greater holidays and a whole number of smaller ones, and moreover, to fast on all the fast days, as well as on every Wednesday and Friday. After the fifth, to honour both father and mother, we are taught to honour the emperor, our native country, and all the pastors of the clergy, those who are in authority (in explanation of the latter clause there follow three pages enumerating the various representatives of authority), civil officers, judges, military officials, masters (of servants, and of serfs). I quote from the sixty-fourth edition, published in 1880. Twenty years had passed since the abolition of serfdom, yet no one had given himself the trouble to get rid of a phrase, which, under the pretext of the commandment to honour our parents, was inserted in the catechism for the purpose of upholding and justifying slavery.

After the sixth commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," it is at once explained that killing is to be sanctioned.

"Q. What is forbidden by the sixth commandment?"

"A. The killing of our neighbour by any means.

"Q. Is every case of taking life unlawful?"

"A. It is not unlawful when life is taken in the execution of duty, as follows:—

"(1) When a criminal is punished with death according to law.

“(2) When men kill an enemy in war, for their sovereign and country.”

Later on occurs:—

“Q. When is this commandment broken ?

“A. When any one conceals or sets free a murderer.”

And this is printed by authority in hundreds of thousands of copies, and is taught with threats and under fear of punishment to all the Russian nation as Christian doctrine! This is instilled into the innocent minds of children, of whom Jesus said, “Let them come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven,”—the children whom we must resemble if we would enter that kingdom, and resemble in our ignorance of such things; of whom Christ said, “Woe to him who shall cause one of these little ones to stumble.” It is to these very children that such things are taught as the sacred law of God!

This is not a secret proclamation, distributed clandestinely at personal risk, but a State publication, disobedience to which is punished with penal servitude in the mines. Even now, as I write this, I feel a sense of risk at having said that the principal commandments of God, written in all the laws and in all our hearts, cannot be set aside by words which explain nothing—such as “the execution of duty for the sake of the sovereign and the country”—and that this ought not to be taught to the people.

Yes, that has happened of which Christ warned men: (Luke xi. 33–36, and Matt. vi. 23), “Look that the light that is in thee be not darkness. If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is the darkness!”

The light that is in us has turned to darkness, and the darkness in which we live has become terrible.

“Woe unto you,” says Christ, “Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because ye shut the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye others to enter. Woe unto

you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and pray in public as performing a duty, for which you are only the more guilty. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte; and when he is become so, ye make him worse than he was. Woe unto you, blind guides!"

"Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and garnish the tombs of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we should not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye witness to yourselves, that ye are sons of them that slew the prophets. Fill up then the measure of your fathers. Therefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: some of them shall ye kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth from the blood of Abel."

"Every blasphemy (calumny) shall be forgiven to men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven."

All this seems to have been written but yesterday against those who no longer compass sea and earth, calumniating the Holy Ghost, and converting men to their faith to make them worse, but who oblige men by violence to accept their faith, and who persecute and hunt to death every prophet and righteous man who attempts to expose their deceit.

Thus I became convinced that the teaching of the Church, notwithstanding that it calls itself Christian, is itself the very darkness with which Jesus struggled, and against which he commanded his disciples to struggle.

The teaching of Jesus, like every other religious system, may be looked at from two points of view:

(1) As instruction for the life of men, how men should live individually and together; (2) As an explanation of the reasons why men should live in this way and not in another: the first being an ethical system, the second its metaphysical basis. The one is the consequence, and at the same time the cause, of the other. Man ought to live thus, because this is the end for which he was appointed; or, this end being appointed for man, he ought to live thus. These two sides of every doctrine are found in all the religions of the world. They are found in the religion of the Brahmins, of Confucius, of Buddha, of Moses, and in the religion of Jesus. They teach us at once how to live, and the reason for that life.

But just as it happened to all religions, so it has happened to the teaching of Jesus. Men fall away from the true law of life, and then they begin to justify their fall. Sitting, according to the expression of Jesus, in the seat of Moses, they explain the metaphysical side of the teaching in such a way that the ethical requirements become no longer obligatory, and are replaced by outward observances, by rites and ceremonies. This phenomenon is common to all religions, but it seems to me to have never been so sharply defined as in Christianity. And this is so, because the teaching of Jesus contains the highest of all doctrines, and because his metaphysical and ethical principles are so inextricably bound up together, and so clearly explain one another, that it is impossible to separate them without depriving both of their meaning.

And it is impossible for yet another reason, that the teaching of Jesus is, in principle, Protestant; it is a denial, not only of the rites of Judaism, but of all outward worship. Hence separation could not but pervert the whole system of Christianity and deprive it of all meaning. And so it was. The

separation between the ethical teaching of life and the explanations of life itself began with the preaching of Paul, who was unacquainted with the ethical doctrines expressed in the Gospel of Matthew, and who preached a cabalistic metaphysical theory foreign to Christ's spirit. The separation became complete in the time of Constantine, when it was found possible to clothe the whole system of pagan life in a Christian dress, and give to it the name of Christianity.

From the time of Constantine,—a heathen of heathens, whom the Church for his vices and crimes counts among the choir of Christian saints,—the Councils are dated; and then the metaphysical side of "Christianity" became infinitely the most important part of the whole system.

In time this metaphysical teaching, with its attendant rites, departing more and more from its own fundamental principles, became by degrees the state of things we now see: a teaching which professes to explain the most incomprehensible mysteries of heavenly life, to furnish the most complicated rites for divine worship, but affords no religious teaching at all for a life on the earth.

All religions, except that of Church-Christianity, require from those who profess them, besides the observance of rites, a proof of their faith by the performance of good and abstinence from evil actions. Judaism requires circumcision, the observance of the Sabbath, the year of jubilee, almsgiving, and many other particulars. Mahometanism requires circumcision, prayer five times a day, tithes for the poor, adoration of the tomb of the prophet, and so forth. It is the same with all other religions. Whether these requirements be good or bad, they involve at least positive *acts*. Pseudo-Christianity alone requires nothing from its followers, nothing either to be done or left undone, unless we count

the fasts and prayers which the Church herself considers not obligatory. The sacraments are all that this Church-Christianity insists on. Even the sacraments, however, are not performed by the believer himself, but by others for him. A so-called Christian is not bound to perform any particular act, nor to abstain from any particular act, in order to be saved ; the Church does everything for him. The Church baptizes and anoints him, gives him the communion and extreme unction, and confesses him, and prays for him—and he is saved.

From the time of Constantine the Christian Church has never required any special deeds from her followers, never enjoined them to refrain from any particular deeds. She has adopted and consecrated all that existed in the pagan world : divorce and slavery, courts of justice, and all the forms of authority which existed before her, wars, and capital punishment ; she has only required a verbal renunciation of evil at baptism ; later, when infants were baptized, she ceased to demand even that.

The Church has accepted in words the teaching of Jesus, but in life has distinctly denied him.

Instead of guiding the life of the world, the Church, to please the world, gave an interpretation to the metaphysical teaching of Jesus which imposed no obligations on men as to their way of life, and offered no hindrance to their living as they pleased. The Church gave way to the world, and having once done that, in turn she followed it. The world did all that it wished, leaving the Church to do what she could with her explanations of life. The world organized its own institutions in flagrant defiance of Christ's teaching, and the Church invented allegories and metaphors to prove that men who were living contrary to the law of Christ were really living in obedience to it. The result was a life worse than that of the old pagan world, and its justification by

the Church as a life in harmony with the essence of the teaching of Jesus.

But time went on, and, notwithstanding the efforts of the Church to conceal the truth, the light of the true teaching of Jesus as it shines in the Gospels, penetrated to the hearts of the people through the so-called heresies, and even through the free-thinkers of the world. Men saw the falseness of the Church's teaching, and began to change the life so long led by them, and justified by her, into one more in accordance with the teaching of Jesus, which had reached them independently of the Church.

Thus it was that, in spite of the Church, men put an end to slavery, of which she had approved; put an end to class privileges; to punishment for religious convictions, justified by her; to the power of emperors and popes whom she had consecrated. Thus it is that they have now begun, in a natural sequence, to put an end to property and State. The Church made no resistance; she can make none now, for the abolition of these injustices rests on the very doctrines of Christianity which she professes to teach while doing her best to obstruct them.

The doctrine of life has emancipated itself from the Church, and is independent of her.

Yet she still has her interpretations, but interpretations of what? A metaphysical interpretation of doctrine has a meaning when there are practical rules for life which it interprets. But the Church gives no such rules. She had an interpretation once for the life which she herself instituted but which exists no longer; if that interpretation remains still, no one believes in it. She has nothing left her, but her temples, her images, her vestments, and her sermons.

The Church carried the light of the teaching of Jesus, for eighteen centuries, and wishing to hide it in her robes was herself burnt in its flame. The

world abandoned her and her institutions for the sake of those very principles of Christianity which she herself had unwillingly preserved. Those principles live to-day without her. This is a fact which it is now impossible to conceal. All who really live in this European world of ours—not merely vegetate in sad or spiteful contemplation, a drag on the life of others, but live actively and healthily—have fallen away from the Church, and live their own lives apart from her. And this is not only true of the west of Europe. Russia, with her millions of rational Christians, both educated and uneducated, who have thrown off the yoke of the Church, proves beyond dispute that she herself, thank God, in this respect does not differ from the rest of Europe.

The authority of Government rests on Tradition, on Science, on the Choice of the People, on Brute Force, on what you will, but not on the Church.

Wars, the Relations of States to one another, rest on the Principle of Nationality, on the Balance of Power, and so forth, but not on the principles of the Church.

Government ignores the Church; the idea that Justice and Property could be based on her, is in our day only laughed at.

Science not only does not co-operate to strengthen her teaching, but follows a development which is involuntarily hostile to her.

Art, which once served the Church exclusively, is now independent of her.

Nor has humanity simply emancipated itself from the yoke of the Church. The only feelings it has for her are contempt, so long as she cannot interfere in the affairs of life, and hatred, as soon as she does anything to recall the memory of her former rights. If the outward form which we call a Church still exists, it is only because men hesitate to break the casket which once held a treasure; and thus alone

can be explained the existence in the present age of the Catholic, Greek-Orthodox, and the various Protestant Churches.

All Churches, whether Catholic, Greek, or Protestant, are like sentinels carefully guarding a prisoner who escaped long ago, and who is now a free man in their midst attacking them.

All by which the world now really "lives," Socialism, Communism, Political Economy, Utilitarianism, the Freedom and Equality of men and of women, the highest thoughts of men, the sacredness of Labour, of Reason, of Science, of Art, all that makes the world advance, all that the Church considers inimical, are parts of the teaching which the Church herself, while striving to hide the teaching of Jesus, unconsciously preserved through the ages.

In our days the life of the world rolls on its course completely outside the influence of the Church. Her teachers have remained so far behind our aspirations, that men of the world no longer hear their voices. In truth, there are no voices to hear, for those the Church still gives forth only concern a state of things which the world has long outgrown, and if it exists at all is fast falling into irreparable ruin.

We are as men rowing in a boat with a steersman. They believed in their helmsman, and he steered them well. But, as time went on, their helmsman was changed for another, who did not steer at all. Still the boat kept on its course swiftly and easily, and for a time the men, pleased with their smooth course, noticed not that their helmsman was idle. But at last they satisfied themselves that he was useless, and, after mocking him, finally threw him overboard. This would have mattered little; but what did matter was, that, in their disgust at a useless helmsman, the rowers forgot that they knew not whither they were going. And this is how it

has fared with the Christian world. The Church is no longer at the helm; it is easy to float on, and we have floated far. All the boasted progress of our nineteenth century means only that we float without a rudder, that we float on, not knowing whither. We live in our own way, and know not why we live. But men cannot travel thus with impunity.

If men did nothing for themselves, if the position they occupy were due to some external force, then indeed they might reasonably enough answer those who ask them why they are in such a position, by owning that they know nothing save that they have always been in the same position. But men create a position for themselves, for others, and especially for their children. When, then, they are asked why they assemble armies by millions, to kill and mutilate each other; why, at prodigious cost of money and labour they erect towns not needed by them, even injurious; why they form their childish tribunals and send men whom they account criminals from France to Cayenne, from Russia to Siberia, knowing how senseless a thing this is. When they are asked why they leave the agricultural life so dear to them to labour in factories and at other work which they dislike; why they educate their children to follow the very life of which they disapprove; why they do all this?—they must have an answer. If these things are agreeable, men will still ask why they exist; but since they are hard and unpleasing, and are carried out with trouble and dissension, it is impossible for men not to consider why these things are done. But they are bound either to cease to do them, or to give a reason for their existence.

They answer,—that the Jews lived after the same way, made wars, punished men with death, built temples, and ordered their life in the way they did, because it was so appointed by the law, which in their conviction proceeded from God Himself. So

it was with the peoples of India and China, with the Romans and the Mahometans; it was so with Christians a hundred years ago,—and it is the same still with the mass of ignorant Christians.

The ignorant Christian answers: Military service, wars, tribunals, executions—all these exist by the law of God, which is transmitted to us through the Church. The present world is a fallen world. All the evil that exists, exists by the will of God as a punishment for the sins of the world, and we cannot correct that evil. We can only save our souls by faith, by the sacraments, by prayer, and by submission to the will of God as shown to us by the Church. The Church teaches us that every Christian should obey without dispute the will of the sovereign, the anointed of God, and his appointed governors, should guard his own and others' property by force, should make war, put men to death, and bear the punishment of death when inflicted on himself by those put in authority over him by God.

Whether these explanations were good or bad, they were once accepted by the faithful Christians, by the Jews, the Buddhists, and the Mahometans, in explanation of all the phenomena of life; and a man who lives according to a law he believes divine cannot be said to act unreasonably. But the time is now come when only the most ignorant believe in such explanations, and when the number of such believers diminishes every day and every hour. There is no possibility of stopping this movement. Men cannot be held back from following those who march in front, and all will come in time to stand where their leaders stand now. But the leaders stand on the brink of an abyss. They stand in an awful position. They have made a life for themselves and for their followers, and yet are they in complete ignorance of what they are doing, and why.

Not a single leader of the day can answer this

simple question—Why do you lead the life you do? I have asked this question of hundreds of men, and never got a direct answer. Instead of an answer to the direct, personal question, "Why do you live thus, and do this?" I always received an answer to some question I had not put.

A believing Catholic, Protestant, or Orthodox Christian, to the question, Why he lives as he does (that is, in opposition to the teaching of Jesus whom he acknowledges as God), instead of giving a direct answer always begins to speak of the pitiful condition of the present unbelieving generation, of the evil men who cause unbelief, and of the meaning and the future of the true Church. But why he does not do what his faith commands he will not say. Instead of answering for himself, he speaks of the general condition of humanity and of the Church, as though his own life had no meaning for him, and he were only occupied with the salvation of mankind and with what he calls "the Church."

A philosopher, to whatever school he belongs, whether Idealist, Spiritualist, Pessimist, or Positivist, to the question, Why he lives as he does (that is, in contradiction to his own philosophical theories), instead of answering directly, always speaks of the Progress of Mankind, of the Historical Law of that progress which he has discovered, and by which mankind is urged towards the Goal of Good. But he never gives a direct answer to the question, Why he does not order his own life by the light of what he believes to be reasonable. The philosopher, like the believer, seems to be concerned, not with his own life, but with the study of the general laws of humanity.

An average man, that is, the enormous majority of half-believing, half-unbelieving civilized men, those who are always complaining of their own lot in life, and of the conditions of man's life in general, and

who foresee ruin threatening everything, to the question, Why he lives a life which he condemns and does nothing to better it, instead of answering directly, invariably begins to speak, not of himself, but of something general, of the administration of justice, of commerce, of States, of civilization. If he is a public man or a lawyer he says, "How is the government to go on if we cease to take part in it while altering our own lives?" If he is a man of business, he says, "What is to happen to commerce without us?"

The average man speaks as though the problem of his life were, not to do the good to which he feels impelled, but to serve the State, commerce, or civilization. The average man answers exactly in the same way as the believer and the philosopher. Instead of the personal question, he substitutes a general one, as both the others do, and he does this because he has no answer to the personal question; because he has no real doctrine of life; and is ashamed.

He is ashamed, because he feels himself in the humiliating position of a man who has no understanding of the principles of life;—but a man never yet lived, and cannot live, without some theory of life. It is only in our Christian world that, instead of a theory of life (that is, instead of Religion), an explanation has been substituted to prove that life ought to be what it was some time or other ago, and that something which no one needs has been substituted for Religion; while life itself no longer depends on any theoretical principles. That is, it remains without any determining aim.

Nor is this all. As usual, Science has acknowledged this fortuitous and monstrous condition of our society as one of the laws that must govern all mankind. Learned men, such as Thiele, Herbert Spencer and others speak seriously of Religion,

understanding by it only metaphysical theories about the beginning of all things and so forth, and never suspecting that they are speaking not of Religion, but only of a part of it.

Hence has arisen the strange phenomenon, that in this age many clever and learned men naively believe that they have got rid of all Religion, merely because they do not accept the metaphysical explanations of the beginning of things which, at some time or other, and for some one or other, explained the Meaning of Life. It never enters into their heads that they *must* live in some way or other, and that the *something* which is the cause of their living in one particular way and not in another, is their religion. They imagine that they have very elevated convictions and no Faith; but however they may talk they have a Faith, when their reason urges them to the performance of any act, for all acts prompted by reason are determined by Faith. The acts of such men are determined solely by the Faith that what is expected should always be done. The religion of the men who reject religion is the Religion of Submission to all that is done by the majority; in other words, it is the "Religion of Obedience to Constituted Authority."

It is possible to live after the teaching of the world, to live an animal life, without acknowledging anything higher and more obligatory than such an authority. But whoever lives thus cannot affirm that he lives rationally; before we can say we live rationally, we must answer the question, "What theory of life do we consider rational?" But we, unhappy that we are, are not only devoid of such a theory,—we are not even conscious of the necessity for one.

Ask any of the men of our day, believers or unbelievers, what theory of life they follow, and they will be obliged to confess that they conform only

to one theory, that of the law, as laid down by the legislators and enforced by the police. This is the only systematic "Doctrine of Life" which Europeans accept. They know well that this doctrine is not from heaven, nor from the prophets, nor from the wise among men,—they are always criticising the way in which the officers of the law exercise their authority. Yet they accept these exactions as the basis of their lives, and obey them as without dispute, even in their most barbarous and terrible form. Let it be once laid down by law that every youth shall be ready, if required, to outrage, or even to slay his fellow, and all the fathers and mothers who have grown-up sons will obey this law,—drawn up, perhaps, by a bribed official, and to be changed, perhaps, the next day.

A conception of laws entirely in harmony with reason, laws which each man feels convinced in his soul are obligatory, is so completely lost in our present society that the existence of a rational law among the Jewish peoples, giving a meaning to all their life, and obligatory, not because enforced, but because it satisfies their inward conviction, is considered a fact only to be found among the Jews. That the Hebrews obeyed only what they profoundly believed to be an indisputable truth proceeding directly from God, that is to say, obeyed only that which agreed with their consciences, is considered a singular feature of that people. That educated men should habitually obey the laws framed by a class of depraved officials and enforced by police officers with pistols in their hands is considered among us to be a quite normal position, though they are laws which each among us, or at anyrate by far the greater number, holds in his conscience to be wrong.

I have sought in vain throughout our civilized society for any kind of clearly expressed principles to guide and explain life. There are none. There

is not even the conviction that they are needed. Nay, there is even a strange persuasion that they are not needed; that Religion is only a certain form of speaking of a future life and of God, a ceremony very useful for the saving of souls, according to the opinion of some, and of no use for anything, according to that of others; that life goes on of itself, and that no basis or principles are required for it; it is only needful to do what is commanded.

Of the two things which lie at the foundation of a faith, Rules for Conduct, and an Explanation of Life's Meaning, the first is considered unimportant and irrelevant, and for the second, an explanation of a life that has passed away, or conclusions and guesses about the historical progress of life, is looked upon as really important and serious. In all that really constitutes the life of man, in all practical questions—"Am I to go and kill men or not?" "Am I to judge others or not?" "Am I to educate my children in this way or in that?" the men of our society give themselves up unreservedly into the hands of others who are as ignorant as themselves why they live, and yet are empowered to control the lives of all their fellows.

And such a life men consider rational, and are not ashamed of. The gulf called national and social life, between the explanation which they call "faith," and faith itself, has now become impassable, and the great majority of civilized men are left with a belief in the policeman and the magistrate.

Such a position would be terrible, if it were universal; but, fortunately, even in our day there are men, the best men of our age, who are not satisfied with such a faith, and have their own ideas on life and human conduct.

Such men are looked upon as noxious, dangerous, and above all as unbelievers, while in reality they are the only true believers of our age; for not only

do they possess a general belief, but they particularly believe in the teaching of Jesus, in some parts, if not in all. They are often quite ignorant of Christ's teaching. They do not understand him, and frequently even, like their enemies, do not accept the leading principle of his faith, "Non-Resistance to Evil." Nay, sometimes they may be said to hate him. But their whole faith concerning the constitution of life is derived from his teaching. However they may be persecuted and calumniated, they are not the less the only men who do not submit without a murmur to all that is commanded, and consequently they are the only men of our society who do not lead an animal, but a rational life; they are the only people who believe.

The thread which bound together the world and the Church, and gave a meaning to the former, has been growing more and more frayed as the vital forces which sustain life have been gradually more and more absorbed into the world. And now these forces have all passed over, and the thread has become a mere hindrance.

The mysterious process of birth is taking place before our eyes. At one and the same time the last link with the Church is breaking, and the process of independent life begins.

The teaching of the Church, with its dogmas, temples, and hierarchy, is undoubtedly linked with the teaching of Jesus. Organs which have become useless in an altered state are thrown off by nature as mere hindrances, and new links are formed with life. So it has been with the Church. Our present development was born of the teaching of Jesus, and the Church was one of the organs of its body. That organ has now done its appointed work and has become useless, a hindrance. The world cannot guide the Church, and its deliverance of the world is not

yet accomplished. That will begin when it recognizes, like an infant, its own want of strength and need for food. This is what must happen to our Christian society; it must cry aloud, from the feeling of its helplessness, of its need of nourishment, and that feeling alone can bring it, as it does the child to the mother's breast, where alone it can be fed.

What happens to a new-born child must happen also to our European world, outwardly so self-confident and courageous, inwardly so full of terror and perplexity. The child cries, struggles, tosses about, gets angry, knows not what it would be at. It feels instinctively its need of food, yet knows not where to seek it.

A new-born lamb uses both eyes and ears, wags its tail, jumps, kicks. It seems from its determined look to know everything; but, poor thing, it knows nothing. All this determination and energy it has received with its mother's blood, and she can give it no more. It is in a blissful and at the same time a desperate position. It is full of freshness and strength, but it is lost unless it go to its mother for her milk.

It is the same with us. See what a complicated, apparently rational, energetic life, boils over in our European world, as though all these people knew what they were doing and why they did it. See with what determination, courage, skill, men act. Art, science, industry, social government, and organization,—all full of life, but alive only because they have been fed by a bountiful mother. Once there was a Church which passed into the veins of the life of the world the invigorating blood of the teaching of Jesus. Every part of the world's multi-form life fed on it, was born through it, and grew with it. But the time came when the work of the Church was done; the vital forces ceased to flow from her. All the organs of the world are alive still,

but the spring from which it once drew its nourishment has dried up, and a new one has not yet been found. Men are seeking it everywhere, save from her who first gave it them. They, like the lamb, profit still by what the mother gave them before their birth, but have yet to understand that the mother alone can give it, but in an altered form.

What the world now has to do, is to understand that the former process of *unconscious* nourishment has ceased, and that another and *conscious* process is necessary.

This new process consists in consciously accepting those truths of Christian teaching which formerly were given to mankind unconsciously, through the Church, and by which mankind still lives. Men must again hold aloft the light by which they once saw, but which has been hidden from them; they must place it before themselves and before all men, and *consciously* live by it.

The teaching of Jesus, conducting life and explaining it, stands now before the world, as it stood nineteen hundred years ago. Formerly the world listened to the explanations of the Church, which, though it hid the teaching of Jesus, seemed sufficient for life. But the Church has outlived her time, and the world has no explanation of its own new life. It cannot but feel its helplessness; it cannot, therefore, but accept the teaching of Jesus.

And above all things Christ teaches us this, that men should believe in the light while the light is in them. He teaches men to prize above all things this light of reason, that they may live in conformity with it, and no longer do what they themselves think irrational. If you now think it irrational to kill the Turks or the Germans, do not kill them; if you now think it irrational to take away the labour of poor men by force in order to wear a top hat or tight stays, or to furnish a drawing-room, do not do

so; if you now think it irrational to confine in prison men perverted by idleness, since there they must undergo dangerous companionship and the worst idleness, do not do it; if you think it irrational to live in an infected town atmosphere when you may live in the fresh country air,—irrational to teach your children, before all else, the grammars of dead languages,—Do not do so! Do not do what the whole of European society is doing now;—living a life, and doing that which it believes to be irrational, and, from want of belief in its own reason, living contrary to it.

The teaching of Jesus is "Light." Light gives light on all sides, and darkness cannot encircle it. We cannot but receive light, when light shines on us. We cannot dispute, cannot disagree about it. With the teaching of Jesus it is impossible to disagree, because it encircles all the errors in which men live without encountering them,—like the ether which physicists tell us pervades all matter. The teaching of Jesus is equally essential for every man on earth, whatever his social position. It cannot be rejected, not because its metaphysical explanation of life cannot be denied (anything may be denied), but because it alone gives those practical rules for life, without which the common life of humanity and the individual life of man is impossible if men wish to live like men, to live as rational beings in the light of reason.

The power of this teaching lies, not in its explanations of the Meaning of Life, but in what follows from that—in its rules for life. The metaphysical teaching of Jesus is not new. It is the same doctrine which is written in the hearts of men and which has been preached by all the sages of the world. The power of his teaching lies in its application of his metaphysical doctrine to life.

The metaphysical basis of the ancient doctrine of

the Jews is the same as that of Jesus—Love to God and to our Neighbour. But the application of this doctrine by Moses and by Jesus was widely different. God, as understood among the Hebrews, required by Moses the fulfilment of no less than six hundred and thirteen commandments, often without sense and often cruel, and all depending on the authority of Scripture. The law of Jesus, derived from the same metaphysical basis, is expressed in five commandments, reasonable, merciful, bearing in themselves their own meaning and justification, and embracing the whole life of man.

The doctrine of Jesus cannot but be accepted by those followers of Judaism, Buddhism, Mahometism, and other creeds who have doubted the truth of their own law; still less can it be rejected by those of our own Christian world who have now no moral law at all.

It does not dispute the point of view from which men regard the world, but, embracing it in itself, it gives them what they have not, what they seek because essential to them: it gives them a way of living, not new, but familiar and natural to all.

You, if you are a Christian, of whatever sect or Church, you believe in the creation of the world, in the Trinity, in the Fall and Redemption of man, in the Sacraments, in Prayer, in your Church. Jesus does not dispute your conception of the world, but in addition, he gives you something you have not. Believing as you now do, you are conscious that your life and the world's life are full of evil, yet you know not how to better them. Jesus (who is also your God) offers you simple and easy rules of life, which will rid you and other men of this tormenting evil. Believe in the Resurrection, in the Heavenly Paradise, in Hell, in the Pope, in the Church, in the Sacraments, and in Redemption; pray as your faith directs you, fast, sing psalms—nothing of all this

need hinder you at the same time from doing those things which Jesus has ordained for you to your good : *Be not angry, Commit no fornication, do not take oaths, do not defend yourself by violence, and do not make war.*

It may be that you will fail in the observance of one or other of these rules. Urged by some sudden temptation you may break one of them, even as now under temptation you sometimes break the rules of your own faith, of the civil law, or of propriety. This may happen under temptation and excitement ; but in your quiet moments so order your life that always you may find it hard to give way to anger, to live loosely, to take oaths, to defend yourself by force. You cannot refuse to accept this obligation, for it is laid on you by God.

You, if you are an unbeliever, a philosopher, of whatever school, you say that everything in the world follows some law which you have discovered. Jesus does not dispute with you ; he is willing to accept the law discovered by you. But besides your law, through which, after thousands of years, the good which you desire and have prepared for mankind may be reached, there is your own personal life, which you may live either in accordance with the dictates of reason or against them. For this personal life of yours you have no rules, except those given by men commonly despised, and enforced by the police. This want Jesus supplies by offering you rules which will certainly harmonize with your law, whether it be altruism or free-will, for either is but a bad paraphrase of Christ's teaching.

You, if you are the average man, half a believer, half an unbeliever, who have no time to think about the meaning of human life, who have no clearly defined conception of the world ; who do what all do. Neither with you does Jesus dispute.

He says, " Friend, you say you are not capable of

disputing and testing the truth of the teaching offered you, it is easier to act as others act; but, however modest you may be, still you feel an inward judge, sometimes approving the actions which follow those of others, sometimes disapproving them. However lowly be your lot, you have still occasion to think and ask yourself, "Shall I act as others do, or not?"

At such moments you will feel the strength that lies in Christ's rules; they will give you a sure answer to this question, because they embrace your whole life; and they will answer you in accordance with your reason and your conscience. If you are nearer to belief than to unbelief, then, by so acting, you are fulfilling the will of God; if you are nearer free-thinking, then, by so acting, you are acting by the most reasonable rules which exist in the world, of which you yourself will become convinced, for the rules of Jesus carry in themselves their own meaning and justification.

Jesus said (John xii. 31), "Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out."

Again (John xvi. 33), "These things have I spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

And truly the world, that is, the evil of the world, has been overcome.

If the world of evil still exist, it is only as something half dead; it has no longer a vital principle. For him who believes the commandments of Jesus the world of evil is not; it is overcome by the reasonable conviction of the Son of man. The train once started still pursues its straight course, but the driver, having seen the danger signal, has applied the brake.

Whoever is begotten of God overcometh

the world; and this is the victory that hath overcome the world, even our faith" (1 John v. 4).

The faith which overcomes the world is faith in the teaching of Jesus.

CHAPTER XII

THE LIVING CHURCH

I BELIEVE in the teaching of Jesus, and I believe that complete happiness on earth is only possible when all men believe in his teaching.

I believe that the fulfilment of his teaching is possible, easy, and joyful.

I believe that his teaching is neglected, yet, even if I am alone among those who neglect it, I can do nothing else to save my life from inevitable ruin except fulfil it, even as men who find the door in a burning house, can do nothing better than to pass out.

I believe that the life I lived in obedience to the teaching of the world was a life of torment, and that only a life spent in accordance with the teaching of Jesus can give me the good which the Father of life has ordained.

I believe that this teaching brings happiness within the reach of all mankind, that it will save me from inevitable ruin, and give me here on earth the highest good, and that therefore I am bound in reason to obey it.

John says (i. 17), "For the law was given by Moses; but grace (happiness) and truth came by Jesus Christ." The teaching of Jesus is happiness and truth. Once, not knowing the truth, I knew not happiness nor good. Taking evil for good, I fell into evil, and mistrusted my own impulse to seek good. Now I understand, and I believe that the

good to which I aspired was the will of the Father, the greatest and most lawful reality of my life.

Jesus had said to me, "Live for the sake of good, not of evil; believe not those treacherous stumbling-blocks which, deceiving you with the likeness of good, surprise you into evil. Your good and your happiness is in your unity with all men; evil is the destruction of the Unity of the Son of Man. Do not reject the good which is given you."

Jesus has shown me that the Unity of the Son of Man is the love of men for one another, not, as it formerly seemed to me, the end to which men's efforts should be directed; and that this Unity in Love is their natural state, the state to which children are born, as he himself has said, and in which men always live until it is destroyed by deceit, by error, and by temptation.

But Jesus has done more than merely show me this. Beyond all possibility of mistake, he has enunciated in his commandments all the temptations ready to steal from me this natural state of unity, love, and good, and to entice me into evil; he has furnished me with a means of salvation from those very temptations. How, then, can I disbelieve him and his commandments? This, and this alone, is my faith.

Jesus has showed me that the *first evil* which destroys the good of life is Enmity, Anger against other men. I cannot disbelieve him: therefore I cannot consciously indulge a feeling of enmity to others; cannot, as I did once, be glad of my anger, proud of it, excite it and justify it, as proving my own importance and wisdom and the insignificance, foolishness, and failure of other men. Now at the first approach of the feeling of anger, I am forced to confess that I am myself alone to blame, and that therefore I must straightway seek a reconciliation with those who are at enmity with me.

Nor is that all. Besides knowing now that my anger is an unnatural and unhealthy condition of mind, I know, too, what particular temptation led me into it. The temptation lay in my separating myself from other men, in counting only a few of them as my equals, and despising the rest as insignificant men of no account (raca), or as stupid and uneducated (fools). I see now that this way of talking of others as "raca" and "fools," was the chief cause of my separation from men. Recalling my former life, I see now that I never allowed my anger to kindle against those whom I considered my superiors, that I never offended them; but the slightest act of one whom I considered beneath me was enough to rouse my anger against him, and to make me offend him; the higher I thought myself above a man, the more carelessly I offended him. Sometimes even my imaginary supposition of the lowness of a man's position was sufficient cause of offence. Now I know that he is highest among men who makes himself the lowest, who is ready to serve all. I know now why he who stands high among men is an abomination before God; why there is woe for the rich and famous, and why the poor and meek are blessed.

Only lately have I understood and believed this, but it has wholly changed my relative estimation of the different orders of men. All that formerly seemed to me fine and noble — honours, fame, education, wealth, all the artificiality and refinement of life, a luxurious household, food, dress, and outward appearance—all this has become for me poor and mean. All that before seemed poor and mean — the peasantry, obscure position, poverty, unpolished manners, simplicity in household arrangements, food, dress, and entertainment, has now become good and noble in my eyes. And now that I am conscious of the truth, even though in a moment

of forgetfulness I may give way to anger and offend my brother, yet in my quiet hour I dare not yield to the temptation, which by raising me above my kind, deprives me of my one true good—unity and love—just as a man cannot set again for himself the trap into which he has fallen. I can now lend my aid to nothing which tends to raise me above others, to separate me from my fellows. I cannot, as formerly, accept for myself or others any titles or rank, or any name but that of "man." I cannot seek fame, or praise, or learning which will tend to separate me from others. I cannot but strive to get free from my wealth. In my way of life, in food, in dress, and in all outward appearances, I must choose the things that tend to bind me more closely to my fellows.

Jesus has shown me that the *second evil* which destroys the good of life is lasciviousness, incontinence—that is, life with any woman other than the one to whom one has first been united. I cannot doubt this, and therefore I dare not, as I did formerly, consider such conduct excusable, even commendable, and natural. I can no longer justify it by "love for beauty," "passionate temperament," "my wife's fault." At the first symptom of loose desires I cannot but confess that I am in an unhealthy, unnatural state of mind, and so must seek every means to free myself from this evil.

Knowing that incontinence is a sin, I know also the temptations which lead to it, and therefore I can no longer give occasion for it. I know now that the chief cause of temptation is, not that we cannot restrain our loose desires, but that the majority of men and women are separated from those to whom they were first united. I know that every desertion by man or woman of the one they first lived with, is that very divorce which Christ forbids, because those left by the first man or woman

carry incontinence through the world. When I remember what led me to this mode of life, I see now that,—apart from unnatural education, worthy only of savages, which both physically and mentally nourished loose desires and justified them by all the resources of intellect,—my chief temptation arose from my having abandoned the woman with whom I *first* lived, and from the universal condition of all women so abandoned. I see now that the chief strength of the temptation lies, not in our own passions, but in the unnatural position in which we and the women around us are placed. I cannot make a difference between unions sanctioned, as it is said, by marriage and those which are not. I can only consider the first union into which a man enters as sacred and binding.

I understand now the words of Jesus, "He that made them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the twain shall become one flesh, in that they are no more twain but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together let not man put asunder."

I understand that monogamy is the natural law of humanity, which cannot with impunity be violated. I understand perfectly now the words "he who divorces his wife" addressed to him who has abandoned his first companion to live with another, which denounce him for "forcing her to commit adultery"—for having introduced into the world an evil,—an evil which in the end will turn against himself.

This I believed, and this belief changed my former appreciation of what is high and noble, bad and base, in life. What had appeared to me noble, a life of refined and elegant æstheticism, the poetic, romantic love praised by all poets and artists, now seems distasteful and abominable. The rough, rude life of physical labour, conquering the passions, seems

alone the best to me. Great, and to be revered, also, is not so much the human institution of marriage which affords an exterior legality to the union of man and woman, as the real communion of male and female, which, once consummated, can never again be dissolved without the violation of the will of God.

And if still, in moments of oblivion, I am carried away by evil passions, I can no longer, recognizing the snare which lures me on to evil, act unconsciously as I did before.

I cannot now desire or seek the physically idle and luxurious existence which develops sensuality, I can no longer seek those amusements which are fuel to the flame of sensual love — novels, poetry (the greater part), music, theatres, balls, — which in former days seemed only harmless and refined pleasures. I cannot leave my wife, knowing that such desertion is one of the greatest of snares both for me, for her, and for others. I can no longer assist the voluptuous and idle existence of others, no longer assist or be a partner in those licentious modes of killing time—romantic literature, theatres, operas, balls, and so forth, which are still stumbling-blocks for me and for others. I cannot encourage celibacy in those of marriageable age, nor aid in the separation of wives from their husbands, whether their union has been accompanied with church or legal rites or not. The first union of man and woman I must consider as sacred and final.

Jesus has shown me that the *third evil* which destroys the good of life is, the "taking of oaths." Now that I have perceived this I dare not, as I once did, take an oath to any one, or about anything; I dare not now, as I formerly did, justify an oath by saying that it can hurt no one, that all men do so, that it is required by the State, and that it will be worse for me or for others if I refuse to obey. I know now

that it is an evil thing for me and for others, and I cannot do it.

But besides this, I know also the snare which lured me into the evil, and I can no longer give occasion for it. I know that the snare arises from the name of God being used to *sanction* deceit,—the deceit of a man binding himself beforehand to obey the commands of men, though they may transgress the most evident laws of God. I know now that the most terrible evils in the world—murder by war, imprisonment, executions, tortures—exist only by means of this snare of shifting all responsibility for their deeds from the shoulders and consciences of those who commit them.

When I recall the many evils which forced me to condemn men instead of loving them, I see that very many of them were caused by this snare,—by the belief in the necessity of obeying the will of another. I understand now the meaning of the teaching that all that is more than a simple affirmation or denial, yea or nay, every pledge of future obedience, is an evil. Understanding this, I see now that the taking of oaths ruins the good of my life and of that of others, and this belief also alters my estimation of good and bad, of noble and base. All that formerly seemed to me fine and noble: the obligation of fidelity to the government confirmed by oath; the extortion of oaths from men for any purpose; all the acts contrary to conscience done in the name of an oath—all this appears to me now wicked and base. And therefore I cannot now disobey the commandments of Jesus which forbid me to give or exact an oath, I cannot any longer help to make men believe that an oath is important and necessary, or even, as so many believe, merely harmless.

Jesus has shown me that the *fourth evil* destroying good in life is "Resistance to evil by violence." I cannot refuse to believe that this is an evil to myself

and to other men, and therefore I dare not consciously commit it, and I cannot, as I did formerly, justify it by saying that it is necessary for the defence of my person, my property; or that of others. When I first perceive that I am tending towards the use of violence I cannot but immediately stop, and strive with all my power to put an end to this evil.

And I know now the snare which led me into this evil: It arose from believing that the welfare of life can be assured by the defence of ourselves and our property. Now I recognize that the greater part of human suffering proceeds from this belief; that men instead of giving up their own labour take away by force the labour of others. Remembering all the evil which I caused myself and others, and all the evil which others wrought, I see that the greater part proceeded from our belief that it was possible to assure and improve our life by defending our property.

I understand now the meaning of the words—"Man is born, not to be ministered unto but himself to minister to others," and again, "The labourer is worthy of his food." I believe now, that personal welfare and general welfare is only possible when each labours, not for his own benefit, but for the benefit of all, and not only does not refuse his labour to others, but freely affords it to any by whom it is needed.

All, therefore, that once seemed to me fine and lofty,—wealth, property, honours, the consciousness of self-dignity and rights—all this has now become for me mean and base; while all that once seemed to me so mean—labour for others, poverty, humility, and renunciation of all property and rights—has now become lofty and noble in my eyes. If now in a moment of forgetfulness, I can no longer let myself be moved away to defend my own property or that of others by violence, still less can I calmly and

consciously help to give occasion for this snare, which ruins myself and others. I dare not strive to amass riches; I dare not employ any violence whatsoever towards any man whatsoever (save, say, towards a child to deliver it from an imminent danger); I cannot take part in any of those branches of the administration which have for their object the protection of men and property by force; I cannot be a judge, nor take any part in a trial, nor be a governor, nor participate in any governing, nor can I help others to participate in these things.

Jesus has shown me that the *fifth evil* destroying welfare is the distinction which we make between our own nation and foreigners. Feeling this, if enmity arise in me against one of another nation, in a moment of forgetfulness, I cannot but confess the wrongfulness of this in my quiet moments. I dare not justify myself, as I formerly did, by saying that my nation stands above all others, or by the errors, cruelty, or barbarism of another people; I cannot but strive at the first symptom of this feeling to be even more friendly to a foreigner than to one of my own countrymen. I know now the snare which led me into this evil, and can no longer, as I once did, consciously and calmly give occasion for it. I know that this snare arose from the false belief that my own good is bound up with the good of the men of my own nation only, and not, as it is really, with the good of all men on earth, and that my unity with other men cannot be destroyed by a frontier line or the arrangement of a government. I know now that *all men everywhere* are brothers and equals. Remembering all the evil which I did, suffered, and saw done through national enmities, it is clear to me that the cause of all was a gross deceit called by the fine names of "Patriotism" and "Love for our country."

Looking back on my education, I see now that the feeling of enmity to other nations, the feeling of separation from them, was no natural one, but was artificially inspired by a senseless course of education. I understand now the meaning of the words, "Do good to your enemies."—Do to them as you do to your own people. You are all children of one Father, then be like unto the Father; that is, make no difference between your own nation and others; be the same to all men. I understand now, that good is only possible for me if I accept my unity with all mankind without exception. Hence it is that now the love for my country, my nation, and my government, the services I have wrought them to the injury of other men, seem to me terrible and pitiful, and that Cosmopolitanism, and the renunciation of "Patriotism," now seem as noble as once they had seemed shameful.

If the old feeling return in a moment of forgetfulness, still I can never now wittingly give occasion to myself or others for this snare, never help my own countrymen more than I would a foreigner, or desire the success of any one government or people over another. I can acknowledge no States nor Nationalities, can take part in no quarrels of Governments or Peoples, or between Peoples and Governments, neither in what I say or write, nor by entering the Service of any Government. I can take no part in any affairs which grow out of the Separation of States—in the collection of Customs, Dues, and Taxes, in the fabrication of arms, or in anything connected with them, in the Military Service, still less in War itself—and I cannot lend myself to give occasion to other men to do so.

I have understood wherein the good of life lies; I believe in it, and therefore I cannot do what would undoubtedly deprive it of that good. And I believe that by fulfilling this belief life will obtain the one

rational meaning,—reasonable, joyful, and unaffected by death.

I believe that my reasonable life, my light, is given to me that it may shine before men, not in words but in good deeds, that men may glorify their Father. I believe that my life and the knowledge of truth are talents given to me to be put to use, and that these talents are a fire only while they burn. I believe that the only meaning my life has is this, that I should "Live in the light which is in me," and not hide it under a bushel but hold it up before men that they may see it. And this belief gives me a new strength to fulfil the teaching of Jesus, and to destroy the hindrances which formerly impeded me.

All that formerly undermined the truth and practicability of Christ's teaching for me, all that drove me away from it: the possibility of suffering, of privations, even of death at the hands of others ignorant of his teaching, all this now confirms for me the truth of his teaching and attracts me towards it.

Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of man you will all be drawn up," and I felt myself irresistibly drawn. He said also, "The truth shall make you free," and I felt myself completely free.

"An armed enemy will come, or evil men will fall upon and attack me," I used to think, "and if I do not defend myself they will rob and put me to shame, and torture and kill both me and those dear to me"; and it seemed terrible. But now all that once troubled me seems but to confirm the joyful truth. I know now that my enemies and those called robbers or villains, are as much "The Son of Man" as I am; that they also naturally love what is good and hate what is evil; that they too live on the brink of death, and, like myself, seek salvation: and will find it only in the teaching of Jesus. Every evil which they do to me will be an evil done

to themselves, and therefore they should render me good. If they are ignorant of the truth, and do evil thinking it to be good, I, who know the truth, must show it to them, and I can do so only by showing my faith by my deeds, and by refraining from taking any part myself in evil.

“Enemies will come, and if you do not defend yourself against them they will kill you!” It is false. If there were a society of Christians, doing evil to no man, but giving of their abundance to all, no enemies, German, Turk, or savages, would kill or torture them. They could only take by force what they could have had freely, because for Christians there is no difference between Russians and Germans, Turks and savages. If a Christian lives in the midst of a society which is not Christian, and which defends itself by war, and he is called upon to take part in war, that is his opportunity for helping the men who are ignorant of the truth. A Christian knows the truth only that he may bear witness to it before those who are ignorant, and this witness he can bear only by his actions. He is bound to abstain from war, to do good to men without distinction, whether they are so-called enemies, or his own people.

“Not only foreign enemies, however, but evil men among his own people may fall on the family of a Christian, and if he make no defence will rob, torture, and kill him and them.” This, again, is false. If the members of a Christian family devote their lives to the service of others, no madman would be found to deprive them of their substance, or to kill those who were of service to him. The celebrated Maklai¹ settled among the wildest tribes, and not only was not killed, but was loved and obeyed, because he had no fear, asked nothing from them and did good to them. If a Christian lives in the midst of those

¹ A distinguished Russian explorer of Central Asia, of the same stamp as the English Livingstone.—*Trans.*

who are not Christians, and who defend themselves and their property by violence, and he is called upon to take part in this defence, that is the moment for him to fulfil the office of his life. He only knows the truth that he may impart it to others,—above all, to those with whom he lives and who are bound to him by family ties and by friendship; and he cannot show that truth unless he himself does not fall into the error into which they have fallen, does not range himself on the side either of the attacking or the defending party, does not give up all that is demanded to others, does not show in practice that he desires nothing but to fulfil the will of God, and that nothing is terrible to him save to fall away from it.

“But a government cannot allow any member of the society which it rules to deny the foundation of all public order, and to refuse to fulfil the obligations of a citizen. The government requires from a Christian that he should take oaths and play his part in the administration of justice or in the military service, and on refusal it subjects him to the punishment of transportation, of imprisonment, or even of death.” Again, this demand of the government will be to a Christian but a call upon him to fulfil the office of his life. To such a one the demand of a government is the demand of men who are ignorant of the truth. Therefore, knowing the truth, he cannot but witness to it before men who know it not. The violence, imprisonment, or death to which he may be subjected, are an occasion for him to witness, not by words, but by deeds. Every act of violence proceeds, not from unreasoning forces of nature, but from the errors of men who have no knowledge of the truth; consequently, the more evil these men do to a Christian, the farther are they from truth, the more unhappy, and the more in want of the truth. A Christian cannot give

knowledge of truth to men unless he himself refrains from the error which misleads them when they harm him, and renders to them good for evil. This alone is the office of a Christian's life. This is its whole meaning, and one which cannot be destroyed by death.

Men bound to one another by deceit, form, as it were, a compact mass. In the compactness of this mass is the evil of the world. The aim of the whole intellectual activity of mankind should be to break through and destroy this aggregate of deceit. Revolutions are attempts to break up this mass by violence. Men imagine that if they once disperse it it will cease to exist, and they strike it furiously in order to break it up,—but they only weld the atoms more closely together, for each atom must be filled with an inward power of its own before the mass can be finally disintegrated. The strength of this bond of union among men rests on a lie, on *deceit*. The strength which can deliver each particle of this mass is *truth*. Truth is communicated to men only by the *deeds of truth*. Only the deeds of truth, lighting the conceptions of every individual man, can destroy this evil attraction and detach men one after another from the mass bound together by it.

During eighteen hundred years this work has been going on. From the time that the commandments of Jesus were declared to mankind it has been going on, and it will not cease, as Jesus has himself said (Matt. v. 18) "Till all be fulfilled."

The Church whose members thought to unite mankind by affirming, with consecrations of promises of reward, that the truth was in them, has long been dead. But the Church whose members are united not by promises of reward, not by consecration, but by the *deeds of truth and of good*, that Church is alive and will live for ever. It is composed now, as formerly, not of men who cry, "Lord, Lord!" and

work iniquity (Matt. viii. 21, 22), but of men who receive the words of Jesus and obey them.

The men of this Church know that their lives will be blessed if they do not destroy the unity of the "Son of man," and that this blessedness can be destroyed only by disregarding the commandments of Jesus. They, therefore, cannot but obey these commandments, and teach others to obey.

Be these men few or many now, they are the True Church which nothing can overcome, and the one in which all men will be united.

"Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

PRINTED BY
MORRISON AND GIBB LIMITED
EDINBURGH

THE FREE AGE PRESS
CHEAP EDITIONS OF TOLSTOY'S WRITINGS.

29. FORTY YEARS. A Religious Legend. 64 pages, 3d; post free, 3½d.
28. REASON, FAITH, AND PRAYER. 1d.; post free, 1½d.
- 21-27. THE FIRST SEVEN STORIES MENTIONED IN NOS. 19 AND 18. 1d. each; post free, 1½d. each, or 1s. a dozen.
20. THE RELATIONS OF THE SEXES. 80 pages, 4d.; post free, 5d. A valuable collection of thoughts.
19. POPULAR STORIES AND LEGENDS. FIRST SERIES (Where Love Is, There God Is. How Much Land Does a Man Need? If You Neglect the Little Fire, You Can't Put Out the Big One. Iván the Fool). 80 pages, 4d.; post free, 5d.
18. POPULAR STORIES AND LEGENDS. SECOND SERIES (What Men Live By. The Godson. The Two Pilgrims. The Imp and the Crust of Bread. The Story of Ilias.) 80 pages, 4d.; post free, 5d.
17. THE ONLY MEANS. A New Article on the Labour Question. 1d.; post free, 1½d.
16. MY REPLY TO THE SYNOD'S EDICT. 1d.; post free, 1½d.
15. THE ROOT OF THE EVIL. A Recent Essay. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
14. DEMANDS OF LOVE AND REASON. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
13. THE MEANING OF LIFE. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
12. PATRIOTISM AND GOVERNMENT. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
11. LETTERS ON WAR. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
10. THOUGHTS ON GOD. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
9. RELIGION AND MORALITY. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
8. ON THE PERSONAL CHRISTIAN LIFE. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
7. SOME SOCIAL REMEDIES. 40 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d. Nos. 7 to 15 are the well-known "New Booklets on Important Questions." Uniform style. Long 8vo, green wrappers; post free, 2s. 6d. the nine.
6. HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE? A Letter to Workers. 1d.; post free, 1½d.
5. RESURRECTION. New popular Complete Edition of this great novel, 6d.; post free, 8d.
4. THE SLAVERY OF OUR TIMES. 128 pages, 1s.; post free, 1s. 1½d. In cloth, 1s. 6d. nett; post free, 1s. 8d. (*Cheap Edition, without Portrait or Introduction, 3d.; post free, 4d.*)
3. HOW I CAME TO BELIEVE. ("My Confession.") Complete Edition, 64 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
2. WORK WHILE YE HAVE THE LIGHT. Complete Edition of this beautiful story of Early Christian Life. 64 pages, 3d.; post free, 3½d.
1. THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST'S TEACHING. 1d.; post free, 1½d. Better Edition, post free, 7d.

THE FREE AGE PRESS, CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS.

or Wholesale from SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & Co. LTD., London, E.C.; F. R. HENDERSON, Paternoster Square, London, E.C.; THE CLARION CO. LTD., 72 Fleet Street, London, E.C.; A. HEYWOOD & SON, and JOHN HEYWOOD, Manchester; and J. MENZIES & Co., Glasgow, etc.

OTHER BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS

TO BE HAD OF THE FREE AGE PRESS.

- SEVASTOPOL, AND OTHER MILITARY STORIES. By LEO TOLSTOY. New Translation by Mr. and Mrs. MAUDE. Large crown 8vo, gilt top, with Portrait of Tolstoy, post free, 6s. 4d.
- RESURRECTION. A Novel. By LEO TOLSTOY. A new completely Revised Translation, with Additional Matter and Alternative Readings, by Mr. and Mrs. MAUDE. Thirty-seven Illustrations by Pasternak. Large crown 8vo, post free, 6s. 4d.; limp cloth, without Illustrations, post free, 2s. 3d. *These Two Books are in Mr. Grant Richards' Library Edition.*
- TOLSTOY AND HIS PROBLEMS. By AVYLMER MAUDE. New cheap edition, post free, 1s. 2d. paper; 2s. 3d. cloth.
- TWO PORTRAITS OF TOLSTOY. Post free, 2½d. the pair. Also Five new 8x6 Photographs, mounted, post free, 2s. 3d. each; or 10s. the set.
- THE FREE AGE PRESS LEAFLETS. By LEO TOLSTOY. Nos. 1 to 12, 3d. a set; or 1s. a hundred, assorted, post free.
- CHRISTIAN MARTYRDOM IN RUSSIA. By V. Tchertkoff. With Letter by Tolstoy. (An account of the persecuted Doukhobors.) 1s. nett; post free, 1s. 1d.
- THE INDIAN FAMINE: ITS CAUSES AND EFFECTS. By W. L. HARE. A clear and convincing account of misrule in India. Post free, 4d.
- PLAIN TALK IN PSALM AND PARABLE. By E. H. CROSBY. A Cheap Edition of this fine book of ideals. Post free, 1s. 3d.
- THE CHRISTIAN TEACHING. By LEO TOLSTOY. 64 pages, post free, 1½d. A remarkable view of Christian philosophy.
- MODERN SCIENCE. By LEO TOLSTOY. Post free, 1½d.
- THE TRIUMPH OF LABOUR. By LEO TOLSTOY. Post free, 2½d.
- THE FIRST STEP. The Ethics of Diet. By LEO TOLSTOY. Post free, 7½d.
- GUY DE MAUPASSANT (40 pages), and STOP AND THINK. Both by LEO TOLSTOY. Post free, 6½d. each.
- PATRIOTISM AND CHRISTIANITY. By LEO TOLSTOY. 54 pages. Post free, 7d.; in cloth, with Additional Matter, 1s. 1d.
- WHAT IS ART! By LEO TOLSTOY. Cloth gilt, post free, 1s. 9d. (Also in paper, Three Parts, large quarto size. *New Order Supplement.* Post free, 10d.)
- WHAT SHALL WE DO THEN?—THE GOSPEL IN BRIEF.—THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU. Cloth, post free, 2s. 10d. each. ("Kingdom of God," also in paper, post free, 1s. 3d.)
- FIELDS, FACTORIES, AND WORKSHOPS. By P. KROPOTKIN. New Edition of this valuable book. Recommended by every Reform paper. Boards, post free, 2s. 3d.; cloth, 2s. 4d.
- AN UNOFFICIAL CATECHISM OF THE RELIGION OF THE CHRISTIANS. By ONE OF THEM. Post free, 3½d. (Friends should read this.)
- THE NECESSITY FOR A REVOLUTION IN EDUCATION. A thoughtful and unusual Pamphlet by H. E. HARE. Post free, 1½d.
- THE TEACHING OF TOLSTOY, and WAR AND PATRIOTISM. By AVYLMER MAUDE. Post free, 1½d. each.
- THE TEACHING AND INFLUENCE OF TOLSTOY IN ENGLAND. Post free, 2½d.—FROM BONDAGE TO BROTHERHOOD. Post free, 1s. 2d.—THE ANATOMY OF MISERY. Post free, 1s. 2d.—THE GOSPEL IN STATE AND COMMERCE. Post free, 1s. 1d. All by J. C. KENWORTHY.
- WHERE DID THE BIBLE COME FROM? Post free, 1½d.—THE ULTIMATE AUTHORITY IN RELIGION. Post free, 2½d.—THE PLAIN TRUTH ABOUT THE BIBLE. Post free, 6½d. All by J. PAGE HOPPS.

THE FREE AGE PRESS, CHRISTCHURCH, HANTS.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES
CECIL H. GREEN LIBRARY
STANFORD, CALIFORNIA 94305-6004
(415) 723-1493

All books may be recalled after 7 days

DATE DUE

F/S JUN 30 1994

JAN 30 1994

DEC 20 1999

JAN 31 2000

28D MAY 15 1996

MAY 12 1996

JUN 17 2003

JUN 30 2003

NOV 17 2005

FEB 8 2006

FEB 25 1997

287 MAR 6 1997

FEB 26 1997

JUL 29 1998

MAY 1998

BR 125 .T613 1902

What I believe.


Stanford University Libraries



3 6105 041 229 720

BR
125
1613
1902

Stanford University Libraries
Stanford, California

 **Return this book on or before date due.**

JAN 1981

SPRING 1981

MAR 28 1983

MAY 3 - 1989

JUN 1990

